



# **AZAD ISLAM AND NATIONALISM**

*essays by :*

**MOIN SHAKIR**

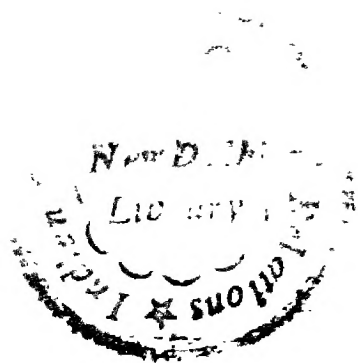
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# CONTENTS

	Page
1. Political Ideas of Maulana Azad	9
2. Religious Philosophy of Azad	40
3. Abul Kalam Azad's Theory of Nationalism	56
4. The Maulana in the Indian Politics	66
5. Maulana Azad's Concept of National Integration	87
6. The Maulana—as I knew Him	95

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## Offering

To remember, Maulana Azad and to contemplate his thought is much more than a matter of gratitude for the people of India. Along with Gandiji and Jawaharlal Nehru the Maulana was the leading luminary who lit the path of Indian Nationalism. Today when this path is sought to be thrown into darkness and oblivion it has become absolutely necessary to go back to our path-finders.

The study of the thought of the Maulana is rewarding as it reveals with rare clarity the moorings of our Nationalism comprising rich diversity of creeds and cultures. To watch the course of the development of his thought gives an idea of how from pre-national feudal preoccupation with religion the makers of Indian national movement came to the realisation of composite nationalism. One learns how a mind steeped in religion and its lore not only reconciles with nationalism but gives to it the glow of that passion and compassion of humanity which frees it from chauvinism and makes it a fit and healthy force to understand and serve the entire human kind.

Maulana was a personality which in its plenitude of feeling and wisdom made no petty distinction between man and man. He was and remained a devout and learned Muslim. and yet, probably because of that, he came to the realisation of the essential unity of Truth in whatever form it may find expression. Consequently, he saw the various religions and philosophies of the Orient and the Occident not as conflicting competitors but as essentially complimentary to one another as instruments of service to humanity. In this he stands with Gandhiji.

Many of the coreligionists and compatriots of the Maulana were not able to comprehend the truth and wisdom of his stand. He had therefore to undergo tremendous

suffering caused by unwarranted misunderstanding and suspicion. That he held fast to his beliefs and principles is the evidence of his deep faith in them as also of his unwavering character. He, therefore, stands as beacon for the upholders of that concept of composite nationalism which the Maulana described as the *Ummat-i-Wahida*.

Strengthening this *Ummat-i-Wahida* is all the more necessary today when the challenges of poverty and backwardness call for all-out, undivided effort on our part. To forget the teachings of Maulana is to forget Gandhiji himself. We have faltered in many ways in living upto their ideals but if we do not rally now there is no hope for us. Unity of various sections of Indian community is a necessary precondition of our survival as a nation. It would, therefore, be foolish for us to be complacent. Unity, like liberty, demands eternal vigilance, particularly in a country like India which has to take long and rapid strides on the road to progress.

The initiative taken by the Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee in setting up a Maulana Azad Memorial Committee to encourage study of the Maulana's thought and to propagate his nationalist ideals is not a day too late because siren voices seeking to reverse, or at least retard, the course of national integration are becoming menacingly loud.

This anthology gives only a foretaste of the richness of intellectual fare that is the writings and speeches of Maulana Azad. The present one is only a humble offering. Much more needs to be done to explore these lush valleys invigorating thought.

We are sure the readers will find these efforts worthy and useful.

—Publishers





# Political Ideas of Maulana Azad

Moin Shakir

A study of Maulana Azad's political ideas involves the analysis of his religious philosophy and the assessment of his role in the Indian politics. His religious philosophy played a vital role in shaping his political ideas and the Indian politics provided an opportunity to try their efficacy. It is to be noted that his interpretation of Islam is not properly accepted. During the Khilafat days Maulana Mohammed Ali was decidedly the more influential leader; afterwards he was characterized as the show boy of the Indian National Congress. The partition of the country was the end of his political dream. Still his religious as well as political ideas are more relevant in the subcontinent than of any other leader of the Muslim community.

Maulana Azad was an outstanding Muslim intellectual of modern India. The range of his mind was encyclopaedic and he was not only an embodiment of the comprehensive genius of the present age but also a unique synthesis of the East and the West. By training religious and by conviction rational and modern, he tried to reconcile religion with reason without injuring either. Here is seen the confluence of tradition and the forces of change. He served as a bridge between the new and the old worlds of thought. With him the distinction between old and new did not count. The old was his heritage and the new was as familiar as the old.

## Early Influences

In the shaping of Azad's mind his ancestry did play an important role. He had a great admiration for certain fundamental values which he derived from his ancestors. What was dearer than anything else was truth. His ancestors never

cared or wished for worldly wealth. He mentioned Maulana Jamaluddin with pride as one who refused to sign the Infallibility Decree of Akbar. His son, Shaikh Mohammed, did not hesitate to go against Jehangir and support Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi. Quazi Sirajuddin, Maulana Munawwaruddin and Maulana Khairuddin also courageously fought against those forces which they thought "UnIslamic". Thus what Maulana Azad inherited from his ancestors was a legacy of orthodoxy and rigid adherence to the letter of the scriptures. Right from Maulana Jamaluddin to Maulana Khairuddin one observes a vigorous current of religious reaction. They betrayed lack of political insight and wisdom and failed to grasp the political implications of their orthodoxy or support their reactionary political role. He appreciated their erudition and their courage in defying political authority. They could utter truth in a downright manner before the kings with a courageous disregard of consequences.

The early education imparted to Azad under the rigid guidance of his father was of the traditional type. But his logical bent of mind, infinite vastness of knowledge and command over expression led him to discussions with notable theologians like Abdul Haq Haqqani and Maulana Abdullah Taunki.

But Azad did not regard the merits of ancestry as the sole token of honour. He was a blind follower of his father. His restless mind was not satisfied with the orthodox religious approach. He was gifted with the faculty of original thinking and independent judgement. He expressed openly his repugnance to imitation (*Tagleed*) even if it be the imitation of his father. He was inspired by the rationalism of the Motezzelized. Azad, unlike his father, did not consider Motezzelized cult as atheistic. The result of Azad's inclination to rationalism was his acceptance of Sir Syed's religious approach. He held that Sir Syed's efforts were aimed at an intellectual revolution in the Muslim mind. Under the influence of Sir Syed, he realized that a person has no claims to be called "educated in science, philosophy and literature." He also displayed distrust in the institution of the Ulema. Education in English, according to him, produced "a great mental crisis", and knowledge of modern science revolutionised faith. Many old concepts and

values had become outmoded and superfluous. He thought that every old value need not be useful and relevant to the modern age. Azad, therefore, considered Sir Syed as a great Mujaddid. This phase, however, lasted for a very short period.

In the meantime he came into contact with the writings of Rasheed Raza of Egypt. Thereafter he began to deviate from Sir Syed. He found that the application of rationalism results first in scepticism and then leads to the negation of religion. Azad could not reconcile himself to such possibilities. He believed that Sir Syed had no answer to questions like existence of God, attributes of God, eternity of soul, divine revelation, prophethood etc. These theological deviations became the basis of differences in political approach as well. He held that the political lead given to the Muslims by Sir Syed was misdirected and a blunder. The Aligarh movement was confined to the problems of the Muslims of India, but Azad believed that no local or national movement could be beneficial to the Muslims. What was needed was a universal movement in the Muslim world. Strangely enough, Azad stated that the Muslims in India wasted forty years for the achievement of the object of education. But it will be unfair to Azad to infer that he rejected the views of Sir Syed in toto. Rejection of some of the elements of Sir Syed's thoughts did not connote a concession to orthodoxy either. The influence of Sir Syed's approach was abiding. Under Sir Syed's influence he strongly felt that there is no conflict between the Quran and Science. The theory expounded by Darwin agrees with the spirit of the Quran. Moreover, Azad never denied that what is of lasting value in Sir Syed's thoughts, was an attempt to do away with imitation and vigorous support to *ijtehad*. Azad's religious and political philosophy was guided by these principles and he emphasised that this legacy of Sir Syed should never be lost sight of.

Azad had some basic differences over the political programme of the Aligarh movement, and he chose to support the policy of Congress. This was already done by Shibli. Azad had met him for the first time in 1905, when he (Azad) was getting disillusioned with rational feature of Sir Syed's theology. Being the editor of *Al Nadva* he had the opportunity

to work with Shibli. The futility of Sir Syed's political programme and the distrust in the Western educated class, which formed the characteristic feature of Shibli's thought, tremendously influenced Azad. His own journal became a medium of dialogue with the masses and attained no mean success in popularising these ideas of Shibli. Azad himself thought that the Western educated people in India were just imitating the West and distorting the image of oriental culture, civilisation ethics, learning as well as religion. He also wrote that the western system had not contributed to learning, culture and civilisation. During this period, Azad was led inevitably to a reactionary and medieval concept of religion. He opposed even the idea of equal rights for women and of discarding the age-old practice of Pardah.

Azad was also influenced and inspired by the teachings of Jamaluddin Afghani. An anti-imperialist by conviction, Jamaluddin Afghani could not reconcile himself with the pro-British attitude of Sir Syed. Besides, Sir Syed was concerned only with the problems of the Muslims in India, while Jamaluddin was free from such a narrow outlook. Shibli was also inclined towards the ideals of pan-Islamism. Thus Azad's opposition to the local Aligarh Movement and the territorial nationalism was the natural outcome of the influence of Afghani and Shibli.

Meanwhile, Azad was also influenced by the writings of Mohammed Abduh. He borrowed from Mohd. Abduh the methods of the study of religion and its presentation in the modern age. Azad's approach to the essence of providence, the relationship of reason with religion and prophethood is more or less the same as that of Abduh. Curiously enough, Azad, who admired Mohammed Abduh and Rasheed Raza was unsparingly critical of the modernists in India. His view was that they were lacking in Islamic learning, grip over fiqh, command over expression.

### Early Political Programme

By rejecting the religious and the political tenets of the Aligarh Movement, Azad outlined his own programme of the

Islamic politics through his journal, *Al Hilal*. *Al-Hilal's* political mission revealed clearly the influence of Afghani and Shibli. It is also to be noted that before 1905, Azad was not hostile to the British Raj in the country. In 1902, he admitted that in the entire history of the country there had been no government which developed so much regard and respect for the liberties of the people, irrespective of their caste, creed and community. He also expressed his gratitude to the British Emperor for maintaining the independent existence of Islam and to the West for preserving Islamic-Arabic literature. In *Al-Hilal* one finds a metamorphosis of the earlier ideas and the ideals of Azad. Azad held that Islam presents the sovereign remedy to all evils. The nature of prevailing situation and crises, according to Azad, is not very much different from that of the sixth century A. D. in which Islam originated. What is required is true adherence to Islam which provides the most comprehensive and perfect law to mankind. This view of Islam presents the "romantic" ideals of the Indian Muslims. It verily forms the basis of the idealistic and pan-Islamic trends of Muslim politics. In Islam, according to Azad, religion and politics are the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

Azad's earlier life, political thought and programme are characterised by romanticism. The chief aim was the realisation of the Shariah and the integration of the Millat. Azad made a minute analysis of the stagnant condition of the Muslim Society and the crises which it was facing and stimulated them for fresh action. He criticised the role of both Congress and the Muslim League. According to him, the partition of Bengal and its rendition had no religious significance. Azad's suggestion was that the community should aim at the establishment of the divine kingdom, sovereignty of God, maintenance of peace, good government and the supremacy of Truth.

Azad surveyed Indian politics in terms of religion. He accepted the conventional divisions of mankind made by Islam into believers and non-believers and described them as the people of paradise and the people of Hell, the former the friends of God and the latter the friends of Devil. The Quran had pro-

promised that the friends of God will be rewarded. It also commanded them to resort to force for exterminating the non-believers. They should form a party. It would be a party of God. Their success is certain, as it is assured by God. Azad actually attempted to form such a party. He wanted to become the Imam of Muslims. He actually campaigned for that.

## Rejection of Romanticism

Azad attempted to develop a systematic theory of politics along the lines of romanticism. He was perhaps the only Muslim intellectual who sincerely applied his theory to the existing problems. He wanted to give radical and comprehensive reorientation to the existing politics on intellectual plane.

After the World war I Azad began to doubt the efficacy of his romantic scheme. This realisation was destined to affect his political outlook. The factors which revolutionised his outlook were many and varied. The changes taking place inside and outside the country turned him into an uncompromising anti-imperialist. He objectively studied the developments in the Islamic countries like Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Turkey and came to the conclusion that nationalism and Islam are not antagonistic. But in India the Muslims were in minority. It called for a realistic and non-romantic approach. He believed that there were safe-guards for the survival of the Muslim culture and there could be no harm in Muslims joining the Indian National Congress. It would not amount to an un-Islamic act. This conclusion marked the end of the Utopian and sentimental romanticism and formed the preamble for the union of diverse intellectual and religious forces in the country for a combined fight for national freedom.

Within the country, Azad was convinced on the basis of the attitude of the British government towards the liberties of the people that an imperialist government was invariably anti-democratic. The rendition of Bengal, the Kanpur mosque incident, the Jalianwala Bagh tragedy on the one hand and the anti-Muslim foreign policy of the British on the other, constrained Azad to join the Congress, which stood for the establishment of justice, liberty and equality for one and all in the country. Besides, the end of the Khilafat Movement was

practically the end of the romantic phase of the Muslim leadership. It revealed to Azad the futility of spiritualised politics and of pan-Islamism as an instrument for the liberation of India. The abolition of the institution of Khilafat shocked Mohammed Ali and drove him to nationalism; Iqbal did the same. But it brought Azad closer to Indian Nationalism. The Indian nationalism as it was conceived by Azad was neither Hindu nor Islamic, it was secular and was directed towards a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim cultures. This made him an advocate of Islam in the liberal and progressive sense. He no more remained anti-west.

Here also it should be noted that unlike Sir Syed, Azad's approach to the West was creative. He wanted to achieve a creative unity and a synthesis of the East and the West. Azad denied emphatically that there was any necessary opposition between faith and reason and between religion and the spirit of the Western civilisation.

Azad's philosophy of religion was rational. He regarded the reasoning faculty in man as the noblest of his faculties. Reason is the driving force which leads to "an endless vista of progress". As K. G. Saiyidain says, Azad is a rationalist but his rationalism does not clash with his belief in religion and rather draws strength and inspiration from it. Azad held that religion would never lose its importance in the scheme of human life, as it is essential for the development and satisfaction of the human spirit. Unlike philosophy and science, religion supplies faith to man. This shows that his view of Islam was flexible, liberal, tolerant and "humanitarian."

There are two aspects to Azad's concept of nationalism. One is his attitude towards the British Raj and the other his attitude towards his countrymen. Owing to the influence of Sir Syed, Azad was initially not anti-British, but a supporter of the British Government. Even upto 1905, there was no change in his stand. He advocated to his fellow Muslims the need for aloofness from active politics and the steady pursuit of a peaceful way of life.

The second phase of his career began with disillusion-

ment with the British regime leading to anti-imperialism. He realized that the Britishers were out to suppress all the movements for liberation in the Muslim countries, and that their policy would be no different in India. Azad evolved his own strategy to destroy the fabric of imperialism. The Muslims should be organised as one body with the Quran as their guide to conduct. They should become true or ideal Muslims and should form a party of God with the battle cry of Jihad. Such a party would be able to liberate the Muslims from the tyranny of British imperialism. But should the Muslims make common cause with the Hindus, who are aspiring for the liberation of the country? Azad's view was that they should not join any non-Muslim organisation, whatever its objects may be. They should follow Quran alone and should neither yield to the British nor to Hindus; to follow the Hindu would be "disgraceful". Such were the ideas of Azad in his early political career when he was yet to reckon with the new social forces which had emerged within the Indian society. Azad was still under the spell of Pan-Islamism and was not prepared to identify himself with the Indian conditions or to recognise the territorial basis and claims of nationalism.

The third phase in the evolution of Azad's thought was the acceptance of Indian nationalism as a reality. This was due to the recognition of the unalterable facts of Indian politics, the rise and growth of Indian nationalism and of nationalism in the Middle East. In India a reassessment of the Muslim problem was imperative. To many of the Muslim intellectuals the situation was challenging and provoked different types of response, pan-Islamism of Maulana Mohd. Ali, Islamic nationalism of Iqbal, and the two-nation theory of the Muslim league. But Azad's approach to religion gave a distinctive shape to his political ideas. The principle of tolerance and brotherhood, and a long history of the growth of composite culture had forged unity between Hindus and Muslims against the alien rule. He saw the unity that asserted itself against the rich background of diversity in the country. It was at this stage that Azad came into contact with Gandhi.

The growth and development of Indian nationalism was not always coherent or consistent. The moderates and the extremists formed the main rival forces up to the advent of Gandhi in Indian politics. The confluence of religion and politics under the extremists succeeded in broadening the base of the nationalist movement and giving it a mass appeal. Religion and nationalism became almost convertible terms in the speeches and the writings of Sri Aurobindo and Tilak. Azad being orthodox, should have joined the extremists. But he refrained from doing so. He was aware of the failure of Maulana Mohd. Ali's mission. Gandhi was one half a liberal and the other half an extremist. C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru etc. represented progressive and liberal nationalism. Azad was alive to the hard reality that militant nationalism would lead to religious obscurantism and mysticism in politics and weaken the secular character of the political movement. Azad had come out of the shell of religiosity by abandoning his romanticism. He could clearly comprehend that politics and religion had combined to turn the docile nationalism of the liberals into the militant nationalism of the radical wing.

Indian Nationalism as envisaged by Azad was, however, democratic and secular. In this respect there is a similarity between the attitude of Azad and C. R. Dass. Indian Nationalism, according to C. R. Dass, was a "process through which a nation expressed itself and finds itself, not in isolation from other nations, not in opposition to other nations but as a part of a great scheme by which in seeking its own way, expression and therefore its own identity, it materially assists the self-expression and self-realization of other nations as well ; diversity is as real as unity"<sup>1</sup>. Azad also believed that nationalism is the goal and the struggle for independence or self government, and an equal and respectable position in the society of nations. The spirit of Indian Nationalism was not created, as Craddock thought, by the development of transport and communications ; but by imperialist exploitation and the suffering of the Indian people. It is not parochial and inward looking. C. R. Das and Gandhiji had clearly enunciated the broad and healthy character of Indian Nationalism. Azad never had any misgiving about the varacity and

efficacy of his views of nationalism. He forcefully advocated that such nationalism would not kill the spirit of Islamic brotherhood but would rather enrich and strengthen it. Khuda Baksh and other liberals had already arrived at the same conclusion. To Khuda Baksh "this nationalism of today does not supersede—much less annihilate—that spiritual brotherhood of Islam which includes the entire Islamic fraternity in its large and enlarging embrace. It does not weaken Islam. It strengthens it within its own geographical limits. Each nation may work out its own destiny. But it will never forget that beyond the national limit there is a brotherhood of Islam."<sup>2</sup>

Azad believed that nationalism was capable of being a progressive force if it was liberated from religious orthodoxy and narrow-mindedness. Azad held that narrow mindedness is a "disease in politics under the guise of nationalism. Nationalism was for the liberation of subject peoples against autocratic regimes ; but it was necessary, he believed, to guard against nationalism becoming a hindrance to world unity and peace. The future of mankind would be dark indeed, if the force of nationalism was not subdued to the larger interests of mankind."

Azad's faith in nationalism, as Gandhi described it, was "as robust as his faith in Islam". Azad's interpretation of Islam made a compromise with nationalism. He was as devoted to his religion as he was to the ideal of the liberation and independence of his country. Azad made it clear that the Prophet of Islam proclaimed the message of monotheism and announced his prophethood. The Prophet used to pray "O God I bear witness that all people are brothers to one another. Differences they might have created amongst themselves, but you have united them together with a single bond of humanity."<sup>3</sup> Thus Islam fosters nationalism avoiding communal and racial prejudices.

Every Indian Muslim, according to Azad, is a member of the Indian Nation and could not by virtue of the common bond of religion, separate himself from the larger Indian society and claim the status of independent nationhood.

Religious to the core as he was, Azad would not countenance nationalism based on religion, especially in the Indian context of multiplicity, as it would be a force for division, rather than unity in the wider sense. Even Gibb reflects that strict adherence to the teaching of Islam would lead to conflict with the secular character of the state. But Azad felt that the Muslim minority, cannot and should not brand Indian Nationalism as un-Islamic, for it embodies the broad vision of Islam. Nationalism in India was impossible of realization without Hindu-Muslim unity. Azad stressed unity so much that he considered it dearer than the freedom of the country itself. Azad did not deny differences—so-called religious and other differences—between the Hindus and Muslims. As Nehru had observed “lesser men have sometimes found conflict in the rich variety of Indian life. He (Azad) has been big enough not only to see the essential unity behind all that diversity, but also to realize that only in this unity can be hope for India as a whole and for those great and varied currents of national life which course through her veins.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, outer and external form of religion was not of any substantial value for Azad. Everything has to be subordinated to the interest of communal harmony. Azad laid great emphasis on Hindu-Muslim unity, which he regarded as a legacy of our long history. After the loss of political power the Muslims have betrayed lack of strength and confidence while the Hindus have lost their largeness of mind and heart. This has been a great impediment to the achievement of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Azad, like C. R. Das, never adopted the communal approach for the solution of political and economic problems. He observed that “in future constitution determined by Indian representatives, the Hindus and Muslims, will have to think of the position and interest not as a Hindu or Mussalman, and so on; it will be nothing worth unless it reflects equality of opportunity and economic freedom for all.”<sup>5</sup> He, therefore, wanted that a concerted effort should be made in this direction. C. R. Das’ Pact of Bengal, for which Azad had great admiration is an example in point. He was always optimistic and felt that the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims would never become so grave as to lead to

mutual warfare and bloodshed. They are to be resolved in a spirit of compromise and toleration. In India "every kind of faith, every kind of culture, every mode of living was allowed to flourish and find its own salvation." The question of Indian first or Muslim first was irrelevant for him. "I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure of India is incomplete," he observed in 1940. Azad believed that the interplay of the Muslim and Hindu cultures has given birth to what can be described as a composite and common culture. "Eleven hundred years of common history", said Azad, "have enriched India with our common achievements. Our languages, our literature, our culture, our art, our dress, our manners and customs, the innumerable happenings of our daily life, every thing bears the stamp of our joint endeavour. There is indeed no aspect of our life which had escaped this stamp...this joint wealth is the heritage of our common nationality and we do not want to leave it and go back to the time when this joint life had not begun. If there are any Hindus amongst us who desire to bring back the Hindu life of a thousand years ago and more, they dream and most dreams are vain fantasies. So also if there are any Muslims who wish to revive their past civilization and culture which they brought a thousand years ago from Iran and Central Asia, they dream also and sooner they wake up the better. These are unnatural fancies which cannot take root in the soil of reality. I am one of those who believe that revival may be necessary in a religion, but in social matters it is the denial of progress."<sup>6</sup> This very lucidly underlines Azad's broad view of nationalism and his firm faith in it.

In the fourth decade of this century these views were vehemently criticised by those who had no faith in composite culture. Azad was not very particularly occupied with problems like representation or recruitment to public services, though he was deeply concerned with the welfare of the Muslim community. He shared with C. R. Das the view that the Muslim problem is necessarily of an economic character. He thought that unless the Muslims "were given the necessary assurances for their economic future, they could not be expe-

cted to join the Congress whole-heartedly." Azad said about C. R. Das, "I am convinced that if he had not died a premature death, he would have created a new atmosphere in the country."<sup>7</sup> When the followers of C. R. Das repudiated the assurance, Azad said, "the result was that the Muslims of Bengal moved away from the Congress and the first seeds of partition were sown." He, therefore, asserted that both the communities should have a common objective—freedom of the country. "The Muslims should join the Congress because the Prophet did the same thing when he had to overcome Abu Sufian."

Azad was opposed to the partition of the country not only on political and cultural but also on religious grounds. He held that the scheme of Pakistan is "harmful not only for India as a whole, but also for Muslims in particular, and in fact, it creates more problems than it solves." It was, he felt, against the spirit of Islam, for it lays stress on division more than on unity and synthesis. The prophet had also said "God has made one whole world a mosque." Azad argued that the Muslims are a minority of 90 million people, who are in quality and quantity a sufficiently important element in Indian life to influence decisively all questions of administration and policy." This should also be emphasised that Azad's political ideas were in complete harmony with his philosophy of religion.

From the foregoing discussion it would be evident that Azad's programme of nationalism was composed of two parts : the overthrow of the British Raj and the achievement of the unity of all the people. All the people of India must have the sense of oneness and belonging to the country. The question of the country had been a subject of controversy and a major source of division between the liberals and the extremists since the closing decades of the 19th century. Azad would not agree with the liberals, (like Sir Syed among the Muslims) that the British connection with India was providential. Azad was also not very much interested like the liberals in the issue of social reforms. But like the liberals he emphasised the need to follow constitutional methods though he would not rule out extremism altogether. If con-

stitutional methods were to prove ineffective and fail to bring about the desired end, the people might justifiably resort to violent resistance. Azad had also to work with Gandhiji whose philosophy, like his own, was partly liberal and partly extremist. But he had differences with Gandhi because he believed that the means should be appropriate and effective, not necessarily non violent. In this matter Azad was guided by the teachings of Islam.

Azad believed that Islam does not sanction war unless it becomes inevitable. War and Islam are contradictory and are poles apart. Islam has a message of peace for mankind. Islam preaches Jihad not war as the means for the establishment of permanent peace. Jihad does not necessarily imply warfare but Katharsis, quietness and patience. He also quotes many verses from the Quran which indicate that the essence of Jihad is patience, determination and sacrifice. The purpose of Jihad, when it implies warfare, is not the accumulation of wealth or territorial expansionism but to oppose injustice, war and tyranny. He knew too that consequences of war are not only cruel but disastrous. It has adverse effects on morality. In wars the distinctions of ethics disappear and spying becomes an art. Kind heartedness ceases to be a virtue and all other normal virtues lose their value and utility.

Azad, no doubt, supported the Khilafat movement. For him it was not an entirely religious issue. He said that it was a movement for the freedom of the country, which could inspire Muslims to fight against the alien rulers and unite them with their countrymen. It had awakened an awareness of India's problems among the people of the country. Islam does not permit slavery. Faith in Islam and love of freedom are synonymous. Thus, the Khilafat movement meant liberation of the country and the establishment of the system of Shariat. Moreover, support and participation in the Khilafat movement not only exposed the character of British Government but made Azad think of the propriety of the methods employed by the liberals. He observed : "I was of the opinion that these methods—begging, petitioning, waiting in deputation and so on could not be of much avail. We had to

try to find some means of exerting direct pressure. But most people fought shy of this line of thinking." Azad, however, could not suggest hostility towards the British, but drafted a plan of non-violent non-cooperation. It was characterized by conviction of unity, righteous action, patience, organization and the spirit of sacrifice for the cause of freedom.

This approach of Azad brought him very close to Gandhi's line of thinking. But although Gandhiji was to become the sole exponent and practitioner of non-cooperation, the idea did not originate with him. Azad had already come to understand the usefulness of such a programme. "I had myself suggested a similar programme in some articles in *Al-Hilal*," said Azad. Hiren Mukerji also holds that Azad's role in the formation of that policy was decisive: "Four months before the Congress did so, the All India Khilafat Committee in 1920 adopted Gandhiji's non-cooperation programme in the formulation of which Maulana Azad was perhaps no less responsible than Gandhiji himself.<sup>8</sup>" Azad, unlike Gandhiji, regarded non-violence as a policy and not as a creed. He maintained that war is permissible to maintain freedom of religion and conscience. If tyranny can be eradicated by war, then war is justified. Azad admitted: "For me non-violence was a matter of policy not of creed. My view was that Indians had the right to take the sword if they had no other alternative." Though Azad adopted non-violence as a matter of policy only, he gave his sincere and unstinted support to Gandhi and became his close and trusted associate and a prominent leader of the Indian National Congress. "Congress must place greater emphasis on the freedom of India than on non-violence as a creed", Azad asserted. On the question of support to the British Government during the II World war, Azad wrote, "the Issue was one of pacifism and not of India's freedom. I declared openly that Indian National Congress was not a pacifist organization but one for achieving India's freedom. To my mind the issue raised by Gandhiji was irrelevant." Gandhiji was of the opinion that war should not be supported "even if such participation meant the achievement of India's freedom."

Gandhiji was a convinced pacifist and the logic of facts

would hardly persuade him to modify his position. He was opposed to the Cripps proposals more on account of his aversion to war than his objection to the proposals as such. Azad's mind was not certainly governed by such a consideration. On many questions like settlement with the Government, on the issue of boycotting the Prince of Wales at Calcutta, holding of the Round Table Conference, calling off the non-cooperation movement and support to the Japanese vis-a-vis the British during the II World War, Azad openly expressed disagreement with Gandhiji. When the non-cooperation movement was called off, both C. R. Das and Azad felt the need of an alternative programme. Had such a programme been formulated, it is conceivable that Azad might have supported it whole heartedly and challenged Gandhi's leadership. But because of the untimely death of C. R. Das and also because of the subsequent emergence of an aggressive League leadership, Azad could leave neither Gandhiji nor the Congress.

One of the reasons for Azad's unbreakable association with the Indian National Congress was his aversion to communal politics. He never approved of communalism either of the minority or of the majority. Hence his loyalty to the progressive sections of the Congress. His reaction to B. G. Kher's Chief Ministership is a case in point. Azad thus was secular and progressive in his views and was essentially a liberal though he was not halting and incurably moderate like the liberals' faith as well as a readiness for action, Azad could discover enough common ground between himself and Gandhi.

Azad had been a consistent and unflinching democrat. During the "*Al-Hilal*" phase of his politics he advocated democracy. When he abandoned romanticism his faith in democracy was not shaken. But during these periods he preached two distinct views on democracy. During the earlier phase, Azad did not regard democracy as a way of life. It was accorded a subordinate status in the Islamic scheme of life. It was a period when he considered Islam as the only true and perfect religion. He derived all his ideas from the Quran and Hadith. He regarded the Prophet of Islam as the

personification of all values beneficial to mankind. Azad insisted that the theory and practice of Islam were both against kingship, and the authority of one person. Liberals like Ameer Ali and Khuda Baksh had already argued on the same lines. "Foreign to the Arabs was the idea of hereditary kingship, or of divine consecration, or of sacerdotal confirmation of the royal authority, such as prevailed among the theoretically minded Hebrews. Among the Arabs the prince owed his authority to a general election, the only source of authority which they recognize" says Khuda Baksh. Azad too advanced the same thesis. But his stress was more on the theory of Islam rather than the practices of the caliphs. Azad also held that unity and sovereignty of God and the establishment of the supremacy of a righteous order are the real elements of democracy. Unity of God is a vital principle of democracy because Dualism of God is "insulting to human intelligence and a negation of human dignity." Azad believed that unity of God implied the sovereignty of Islam and the Islam aims at the abolition of the sovereignty of man. It is "*Shirk Fossafath*," Only God is supreme and is above every thing. "Islamic democracy" is subordinate to spiritual authority. It does not admit of expediency but enjoins definite attachment to righteousness and ethical values.

He held that democracy was a form of government based not on force but on the will of the people, characterized by tolerance, equality and liberty. Azad believed that liberty is essential for the development of the personality of the individual in every society. Absence of liberty results in slavery which is contrary to the teachings of Islam. He was also aware of the dangers of unrestricted liberty but he believed that the cure for the mistakes of liberty lay in liberty itself. The "argument for creating a favourable atmosphere and certain preconditions for liberty is absurd," said Azad. Islam was essentially a liberalizing force. It freed man from the shackles of customs and the tyranny of earthly powers. It does "not recognize any aristocracy or bureaucracy. It came to restore the lost freedom of humanity, the freedom which has been confiscated by kings, foreign governments, selfish religious leaders and powerful elements of society. The autocrats thought that might was right; but Islam

proclaimed from its very birth that might was not right.” It is my belief, stated Azad that, liberty is the natural and God given right of man. No man or bureaucracy consisting of men has got right to make the servants of God its own slaves. However attractive be the euphemism invented for subjugation and slavery, still slavery is slavery, and it is opposed to the will and canons of God.

It should be emphasised that to Azad neither Islam nor liberty was an abstract concept. Both demand faith and action. He, therefore, supported the movement for the freedom of the country. That was why he championed the cause of the Khilafat, that is also the reason why he joined the Indian National Congress. He always advised his countrymen to strive for the freedom of the country and to give up scepticism and inaction. He reminded fellow Muslims how their ancestors fought for liberty. The Khilafat movement had certainly a religious appeal. But Azad’s view was that “the presence of the Islamic Caliph is not antagonistic to national freedom and democracy<sup>9</sup>”. Thus, Azad had no hesitation or reservation in supporting any movement against the government. Even in 1912 he said, “We believe that it is the will of God that the nations and countries should be free to govern themselves.”

Azad pointed out that Islam recognises the value of equality. Islam “Swept off racial and national distinctions and showed the world at large that all human beings held an equal rank and all possessed equal rights. It proclaimed that excellence did not lie in race, nationality or colour. It was only righteous action that counted and the noblest among men was he who did his work most righteously<sup>10</sup>”. The Islamic conception of equality is thus not a mechanical but spiritual conception. Azad was also of the opinion that Islamic equality extended over the whole of society, without any restriction or exclusiveness. “The sovereignty of the Prophet of Islam and of the Caliph was a perfected conception of democratic equality and it only could take the shape of the whole nation’s free will, unity, suffrage and elections. This is the reason why the sovereign or president of a republic is like a designated Caliph. Khilafat literally means

nothing more nor less than representation,.....<sup>11</sup>". It gives full rights to women and puts them on par with men. Azad substantiated it by quoting verse from the Quran (2:228). When, however, the Quran said that in certain respects man is superior to woman it was in the manner of emphasizing the principle of division of labour. Azad, therefore, held that the message of Islam is superior to that of the West. The "Western system does not provide real equality. It stands for taking away political power from the hands of the king. There is no social and economic equality. The Islamic way of life is full of instances of political and economic equality. The political life of the Prophet is also a case in point."

The problem of means and ends was also considered by Azad as part of his consideration of the concept of democracy. Azad discussed this problem for he was well aware of the continuous conflict between the individual and society. He did not believe in the unrestrained liberty. If, "the nation is fighting the war of its survival, the liberty of the individual can be curtailed. And there should be no objection to the suspension of laws," said Azad. But individual liberty on which democracy stands was equally dear to Azad. He did not agree with the view of Khalifa Abdul Hakeem who said that "the right of armed revolt by a group of citizens against a tyrannical government is not conceded by Islam..... But Islam being a practical religion which values peace more than anything else, prohibits futile violence." Azad, on the contrary believed that the right to resist unjust rule is justifiable. Azad said that if righteousness can be established by waging war; war may be resorted to. This righteous government may be Islamic but will necessarily be a democratic Government. "If today there was to be established in India an Islamic Government; but if the system of Government was based upon personal monarchy or upon bureaucratic oligarchy, then, to protest against the existence of such a government would still be my primary duty as a Mussalman. I would still call the government oppressive and demand its replacement<sup>12</sup>", said Azad. The denial of the right of conscience is worse than the violence and brute power of the tyrant. It is then the duty of the subject to wage war and to destroy tyrannical rule by all means. When he extracted from any one the promise of

righteousness, one of the clauses of such a bond used to be, "I will always proclaim the truth, in whatever conditions and wherever I happened to be".

Unlike Gandhi, Azad held that "opposing of violence is fully in harmony with the natural laws of God in those circumstances under which Islam permits the use of such violence." He justified the action of Imam Hussain, because Islam in his opinion sanctions disobedience and resistance against tyrant. Open rebellion is permitted against a government founded on untruth and injustice.

It should be noted that during the *Al-Hilal* phase Azad supported democracy. Even during the Khilafat movement he did not give it up completely. He was, however, more inclined towards the secular basis of democratic order. He welcomed the democratic movement in Iran and Turkey which aimed at replacing dictatorial regimes by constitutional governments. Azad now did not explain his concept of democracy in terms of sovereignty of God. What he now meant by it was ; (I) The country belongs to the people ; (II) All the people should enjoy equal rights; (III) The caliph or the head of the government should be elected by the people, he should not claim privileges vis-a-vis the people; (IV) The people with insight (*Ahlur—Rai*) should be consulted on all administrative and legal matters; (V) The country's treasury (*Baitul Mal*) should be the property and possession of the people<sup>13</sup>.

Azad seems to have been convinced (during the post romantic phase) of the final authority of the people in non-spiritual matters. He did not take inspiration from Islam alone but also from the West. "Ours is essentially a democratic age and the spirit of equality, fraternity and liberty is sweeping over all the people of the world. The Asian countries must reconstruct their polity and their society in conformity with that society," said Azad. He never favoured the idea of developing an "Islamic nationality," though he pleaded for the implementation of the programme of social education which would produce the consciousness of citizenship among the people and the promotion of social

solidarity among them.” It is an instruction in the laws of personal public health, “and an attempt to effect some improvements in their economic status, proper training and refinement of emotion”; an “element of the instruction in universal ethics and tolerance, mutual appreciation and universal principles of right conduct.” In his broad spirit of synthesis Azad could even reconcile the seemingly opposed concepts of aristocracy and democracy. He argued that an aristocracy of merit and talent may not supplant democracy but may enrich it with the richness and grace of cultivated minority. Aristocracy may serve democracy by supplying the cultural deficiencies of a broad based power structure. Democracy is not opposed to aristocracy if the latter serves “as an adjunct to democracy and seeks to fulfil its purposes.” According to Azad aristocracy “develops a width of vision and far-reaching imagination,” and thus enriches democracy.

Convinced by the utility and the necessity of democracy, Azad made a conscious effort to determine the type of democracy which would suit the Indian environment. The traditions built up by the British rulers and the prevailing communal situation in India, posed baffling problems to the freedom struggle. Azad was convinced that the contribution made by the British people in India has enriched the Indian policy. The basis of British administration which has been an instrument in unifying the country, should be retained. Moreover, India is a country where different languages are spoken and different religions are professed. Unlike America the principle of cultural and social development in India is not of diversity without sufficient unity but diversified unity.

Azad made a plea for the establishment of parliamentary government in India. “The National Government must be a cabinet government.” Azad never discussed on an academic plane the merits and demerits of the parliamentary and the presidential systems. He held that the Indian situation demands a Parliamentary executive. Azad stood for federalism too. He regarded it as a constitutional device to solve the communal problem in India. He regarded the “Muslim Problem” as essentially the economic problem of a minority.

This could be solved by adopting a federation where the centre would be weak and the constituent units would enjoy greater autonomy. Under such an arrangement there would be no question of the domination of the majority community over the minorities. Federalism would also save the country from partition. Azad pointed out that the Muslims were concentrated in some scattered areas in the country. So "the demand for Pakistan loses all force. As a Muslim I, for one, am not prepared for a moment to give up my right that the whole of India is my domain and to share in the shaping of its political and economic life. To me it seems a sure sign of cowardice to give up what is my patrimony and content myself with a mere fragment of it,"<sup>14</sup> declared Azad. When Azad suggested that to the Cabinet Mission, Lord Pethick Lawrence said "you are in fact suggesting a new solution of the communal problem." Azad believed that the future Indian polity should be founded on the philosophy of federal—parliamentary democracy. Any alternative to such a scheme would be disastrous to India. Partition of the country would then become a fact. After partition Azad visualised that the minorities will "awaken and discover that they have become aliens and foreigners overnight.....they will be left to the the mercies of what would become an unadulterated Hindu Raj"<sup>15</sup>.

It should be made clear that Azad is perhaps the only theologian and politician who did not depict an ideal state. After the abandonment of the politics of romanticism Azad always advocated a progressive and genuine democracy. He thought that such a system would compose economic differences in a modern spirit. "Differences will no doubt persist. But they will be economic, not communal; opposition among political parties will continue, but they will be based not on religion but on economic and political issues. Class and not community will be the basis of future alignments, and politics will be shaped accordingly," said Azad. He predicted that the events would substantiate his thesis.

As far as the cultural problem was concerned Azad believed that if a genuine democracy came into being it would present no great difficulties. The culture and the cultural

rights of the minorities would be protected and safeguarded. This was described in a beautiful manner by Lala Lajpat Rai when he said : What we aim at is not the merging or absorption of one into the other, but the integration of all into one whole, without in any way injuring or loosening each group individually.....this involves the separate existence of each religious community, with the fullest possible religious and communal freedom, each of them contributing its best to the constitution, continuance, independence and prosperity of one National whole." Azad believed that the Indian polity after independence would be democratic and transcend communal considerations. But would the differences be resolved in a democratic order? Is socialism or Communism to be adopted as the goal? He found no conflict between democracy and socialism. Azad certainly belonged to the bourgeois class. But his view was that democracy is not just "political reflection of bourgeois society." To him democratic and National government signified the same thing. He supported socialism as, in his opinion, it fulfilled the requisites of democracy.

## Islam and Socialism

During the *Al-Hilal* phase he had said Islam and socialism are poles apart as Islam does not accept economic equality and opposed the abolition of the propertied classes. Afterwards he gave up this stand and pointed out the similarities between socialism and Islam. Both the systems disapprove of the concentration of means of production and exchange of wealth. Concentration of wealth should be prevented and private property may even be abolished in the national interest. This is a question of policy and is wholly unconnected with religion. Azad believed that progressive democracy could control the economy of the nation without being bound by *laissez faire* philosophy. It cannot rely on big business for solving the economic problem of the nation. If "the rich people give alms or such associations to help the poor are formed the national economic problem will not be solved. In Britain and America no fund could prevent the poverty of the middle and the lower classes..... The solution is that a part of the entire income of the nation, by legislation,

should be earmarked for the welfare of the poor people in the society.” Azad, however, did not accept socialism minus democracy for his passion for democracy was primary. But the inadequacies of democracy constrained him to support socialism which is complimentary and not repugnant to the spirit of democracy.

Azad's conception of the philosophy of democratic socialism inevitably led to a broadening of his moral ideas. These are not connected with any exclusive creed but are commonly acceptable. Therefore, there should not be any objection to introducing such moral or religious instruction in the government schools. This was core of what he advocated after becoming the education minister of free India. He complained that private religious institutions were not broadening the outlook and inculcating the spirit of toleration and goodwill, because “we are surrounded by over-religiousity. Our present difficulties, unlike those of Europe are not the creation of the materialist zealots but of religious fanatics. If we want to overcome them, the solution lies not in rejecting religious instruction in elementary stages but imparting sound and healthy religious education under our direct supervision<sup>16</sup>”. Azad thought it necessary to strengthen democracy at all costs. He regarded that synthesis of religion, democracy and socialism as a universal necessity.

### Essentially Internationalist

The internationalism of Azad is neither Islamism nor the world wide unity of the working class. What is basic to Azad's internationalism is Man and his Thought. “Man all over the world had adopted common methods of reasoning and thought. The human reason is one and identical. Human feelings are largely similar. The human will operates more or less in a similar manner in similar situations everywhere. It is therefore natural that the human way of looking at himself and the world is largely common in different parts of the world<sup>17</sup>”. He thought that such a type of internationalism can be achieved by the right teaching of Geography and History. Geography should be taught in a manner helpful to fostering of a world outlook. History should be made the

medium for the achievement of the unity of mankind. In this context Azad believed that Islam could play a useful role. It would be able to maintain a balance between the extreme opposites of "the anarchy of European Nationalism" and "regimentation of Russian Communism<sup>18</sup>". He was aware of the fact that "Islam possesses a magnificent tradition of inter-racial understanding and cooperation. Islam had still the power to reconcile apparantly irreconcilable elements of race and tradition." Islam will become a potent instrument of internationalism. Thus, Islam is an effort of man to know the "Secrets of the Universe" as well of the "self".

Azad is regarded as the greatest leader of the "nationalist Muslims". Their attitude is generally described as progressive since it was in line with the spirit and policy of the Indian National Congress. It was opposed to the separatist Muslim nationalism which asserted itself under the leadership of Jinnah. It should be noted that there are striking similarities between Hindu and Muslim Nationalism. Both of them have a strong tinge of religiosity. Muslim nationalism, like Hindu nationalism, looked back to its own tradition and was fearful of losing its identity under the dominance of the Hindu majority. Pandit Nehru rightly says that both Hindu and Muslim nationalism "tried to fit in, as far as possible, the new scientific and political habits." They could neither challenge the old nor reject the new. Thus the attempt to harmonize them was bound to fail. This is true also of those Muslims who were within the Indian National Congress while this characterization of the state of mind of the Muslims is broadly true both of those inside and outside the Congress. Maulana Azad must be recognized as an exception. He would never disavow his leadership of the nationalist Muslims but it would be wrong to regard him as representing the general divided state of mind and thought of the community.

### Nationalist Muslims

The nationalist Muslims were "all upper middle class folk, and there were no dynamic personalities among them. They took to their profession and business. Their method was one of drawing room meetings and mutual arrangements

and pacts and at this game their rivals, the communal leaders, were greater adepts..... the collapse and the elimination of the nationalist Muslims was one of the factors responsible for the sorry state of affairs<sup>19</sup>". Humayun Kabir points out that the policy of the British Government (confering of Communal Award), lack of mass support, and dependence on sentiments of loyalty to the past made them ineffective. They became very much like the protestants in the Irish Home Rule Movement. It is to be noted that there was a lack of ideological clarity among the nationalist Muslims. "In the Bijnor by-election the Congress Muslim workers were dressed in the green Islamic colour, carried the Islamic flag with the crescent and star, and raised the cry of Allah-Akbar at their meetings<sup>20</sup>", says Professor Suhrawardi. A. K. Mujumdar asserts that "even in the Congress, the Muslims never coalesed with the Hindus to lose their identity as did the Parsis". The tragedy of the nationalist Muslims was that they could "neither influence Muslims and their leaders nor the Hindus and their leaders. They were helpless and remained in the vacuum." says Acharya Kirplani.

The assessment of the nationalist Muslims would be incomplete and misleading if the character of the Indian National Congress is not properly analysed, without a reference to Azad's role in politics and his personality. The greatest single factor weakening the nationalist Muslims was Congress itself. W. C. Smith has discussed the point in detail with special reference to Gandhi's attitude to the Muslim problem in India. The bourgeois character of the Congress, the socially reactionary policy of Gandhi, the pro-British proclamation made by the top leaders of the Congress, and the encouragement of communalism by the Congress leadership. In addition to this, the Congress never had a clear cut policy on the Hindu-Muslim question. The "militant leaders of Hindu Mahasabha who were also members of the Congress could not fail to have some influence on the Congress," says A.M. Dykov. More often than not, this influence has been great. The "uncompromising attitude of the Congress and its wishful thinking that it represents the whole of the India" antagonized a large section of the Muslims which indirectly weakened the position of the nationalist Muslims.

No leader of the Congress could properly estimate the potentiality of the League leadership. Till 1937 no attempt was made for mutual understanding. As a matter of fact "there was no difference in social or economic policy serious enough to make Congress-League coalitions unnatural or unworkable, and the Muslims therefore felt, rightly or wrongly, that they were excluded from office, merely because the Congress was essentially a Hindu body<sup>21</sup>". Moreover, as Dr. Z. A. Ahmed has pointed out, the attitude of the Congress was that of "a highly deplorable vacillation and lack of self confidence... the field was left entirely open to communal and reactionary individuals and organizations." Consequently, all the nationalist Muslims were not only misunderstood but denounced even by their colleagues in the Congress and their contribution to political life was lost sight of. They were regarded as mere tools of the Hindu majority by the Muslims outside the Congress fold. Qazi Abdul Ghaffar has rightly said that it was the nationalist Muslims who made Congress a "Nationalist organization. It was their leaders who fought tooth and nail against Jinnah's slogan of "separate Islamic nationality." And the tragic conclusion to the politics of the nationalist Muslims and the life mission of Azad was the acceptance of partition by the Congress.

### Azad : A Thinker and Intellectual

Azad, however, was more than a leader of the nationalist Muslims. It was, of course, the responsibility of the leaders including Azad to educate them. But Azad did not possess all the necessary qualities of a leader in the situation which faced him. He was a thinker who could work from above and not with the people. His temperament was lofty and aloof. In one of his letters he wrote that, "it was politics which discovered me." He was the product as also the projector of Islamic renaissance. His source of inspiration was the wide world of Islam and he sought to work out the lessons of that inspiration in the land to which he belonged. Though India was his field of activity, he exercised considerable influence on the life of other Islamic countries. "Very deeply read in the philosophy of the East and West he has shaped the nationalist movement even outside India by the

Power of his pen," says Yusuf Meherally. He is justly compared to the "Pre-Revolution philosophy of France.....The Encyclopaedists." It will be a very great injustice if Azad is to be wholly equated with the nationalists inside and outside the Congress. His *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* is capable of producing an intellectual revolution in India, as well as in other Muslim countries. A. B. Rajput describing the influence of Azad says : "Caesar was man of the moment and Paul a man of future, Caesar was the symbol of his age and Paul was the symbol of those prophetic qualities which create a future age. But Abul Kalam Azad happily combines in him the qualities of both Caesar and Paul, for his action, and achievements, though symbolical of the present age, required, yet another age to be fully understood and recognized<sup>22</sup>". His *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* is as important as the Commentaries by Ibu Tamyian and Hafeez Ibu Qayyam. It is also based upon "truth, reason and wisdom". It is a contribution to the cause of man's intellectual emancipation. The greatness of Azad lies in the fact that he fully embodied and represented the spirit of his age. John Gunther therefore says that Azad was a modernist though an orthodox Muslim. His modernism lay in his correct appreciation of the existing situation and in evolving a philosophy and programme of action which synthesized the legacy of the past and the promise of the future. As Kirplani says, "Azad regarded the Indian National Struggle as not only a duty to the motherland but also to Islam." S. M. Ikram has delineated the basic merits of Azad's religious writings as a refutation of Ilmulkalam (Dialectics), wide publicity of Quranic teachings and raising the standard of religious writings.

With the same insight Azad discussed the problems of philosophy of religion. His philosophy of religion provided a firm basis to his political ideas. He departed from religious revivalism after 1920. He was closer to Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das than to Maulana Mohammed Ali and Jinnah. Thereafter he not only realized but advocated the futility of Islamic government and Quranic politics. Dr. Ashraf who worked with Azad as his secretary says that Azad began to consider socialism as a healthy system and therefore supported progressive movement in

politics and artistic sensitiveness and scholarly detachment made him shy of coming closer to the masses and assuming active leadership.”

It should also be made clear that when criticism is made of Azad, what is criticized is not his political ideas but his role in the Congress. On the one hand he was criticized by fanatic Muslims like Maulana Maudoodi and by the leaders of the Muslim League on the other. Maudoodi is critical because he believed that Muslims themselves should form a party guided by the Quran. He therefore described Azad's advice to the people to join the Congress as suicidal. But what Maudoodi really resents is Azad's abandonment of revivalism and romanticism. Azad, however, would never have taken such a retrograde step.

The Leaguers, whose approach was fanatical and unreal, criticized Azad as the enemy of the Muslim interests in India. Jinnah's telegram to Azad is an example of it. "I refuse to discuss with you by correspondence or otherwise as you have completely forfeited the confidence of Muslims in India. Can you not realize you are made a showboy Congress President to give it a colour that it is national and deceive foreign countries. You represent neither Muslims nor Hindus." It is also not true that Azad failed in evolving from within Islam a political doctrine which could justify a composite India, "Nationalism, which he could equate with human fraternity."

Mohammed Sadiq expresses the view that Azad "was quite as destitute of self restraint and self criticism as Maulvi Zafar Ali and was almost always carried away by his love of rhetoric and flamboyant effects"<sup>3</sup>. He says that Azad "can understand the situation well but he cannot mould himself accordingly. He can fathom the mind of the public, but he cannot go beyond convictions to satisfy them. He can keep his mind and heart at ease during tumult and strife but he cannot use the height of public emotion for his own good."

The critics of Azad's philosophy are short sighted. He correctly visualized and understood the character of Islam

which is no longer “unitary power, no more caliphal, no more pan-Islamic. It is fractured into numerous nations<sup>24</sup>”.

Azad remained an intriguing and dominant figure in the world of Islam. It was mainly because of his epoch-making personality. A “more colourful personality than that of Abul Kalam Azad has rarely walked across the stage of modern Indian history.” Azad’s political ideals present a good example of modern Islam in India. Unlike Sir Syed he was completely successful in erecting the edifice of progressive and modern religion and political philosophy. His political ideas can be compared with any great thinker or philosopher of the Islamic World. In India and Pakistan they will have an abiding influence and relevance.

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# Religious Philosophy of Azad

Alam Khundmiri

The period between the 19th and 20th centuries is considered to be the period of decay and disintegration of the Muslim world. India was not an exception. During this period the Muslims were losing hold of the political power and their economic position was fast declining. But surprisingly enough, Islam has always stood against such calamities and thrived with a certain amount of vigour and vitality in the heartening message of new leaders born. Such periods of depression and hopelessness have always given birth to some renowned thinker who proved greatly effective in the reorientation of the modes of thought and action.

The West Asian and North African kingdoms in the 14th century were on the verge of a collapse and total extinction at the time when the greatest thinker of the middle ages and the most celebrated philosopher of history, Ibn Khaldun, was born, who amidst a life-long struggle against uncertainties and upheavals, succeeded at last in extracting a new consciousness and a new point of view for human life and history.

## Islam in Indian Situation

It is an interesting fact of history that Islam when it was becoming a felt force in the political and cultural scene of India had already suffered great setbacks in the field of thought. By this time its intellectual and theological systems had passed through the stage of growth, development, decay and disintegration. This downfall was not merely imaginary; a real gap had occurred between the political glory of the Muslims and their intellectual stagnation. By the 15th century the situation had become so hopeless that the theologians and

the interpreters of the dogma had lost their intellectual leadership and the spiritual leadership of the community was fast passing into the hands of the esoteric sufis and the wayward poets. The end of Time seemed imminent to the sensitive souls of the sufi, the poet and the seer. But the subsequent history was to prove that though hopeless, the situation was not so helpless and that Islam had not completely exhausted its entire possibilities. New invigorating movements were started and Islam did not merely remain a mere political power in India, it also assumed a form of culture.

Those who saved Islam in these days of its apparent stagnation, were again those who just looked beyond their present moment of despair and revived healthy orthodoxy which was a synthesis of the outward and inward elements of religion and was not a mere unthoughtful compromise like that of the itinerant Bhakti-sufi poets. It was a call to derive inspiration from the Book and adjust the Timeless with the present. In India, when, after Aurangzeb, the Muslims were politically bankrupt, intellectually disintegrated and psychologically disappointed, all of a sudden signs of re-awakening appeared. It was at such a time that Shah Wali Ullah of Delhi attempted a conciliation between Islam, based on Quran and 'Sunnah', and the contemporary demands of life. Shah Waliullah's thinking had an impact and during his lifetime itself assumed the form of a new movement. The solutions offered were not so relevant and some of them were really out of tune with the time, but the Man had the courage to feel that the conventional and the historical image was not undistorted and there was a need to rethink on the implications of the timeless realities of the "Faith", not by merely fixing one's eyes on what once had happened, but by exploring new possibilities in the faith itself. He made a thorough examination of almost all the current controversies which were sapping the energies of the Muslims and had made them ineffective to play a vital role in the contemporary situation. He had a sense of certainty because he considered himself to be divinely guided.

This consciousness of "divine guidance" makes him authentic and also obscure. His was a mission of reconciliation, not

only between the present and the Timeless, but also between the various claims of authenticity in the world of Islam itself, past and present. Shah Waliullah's real aim was to revive and conserve the basic values of the orthodox Islam and to purify it from that "mythology" which had wrongly assumed the name of orthodoxy. In this sense he can be rightly called the founder of Neo-Orthodoxy in Indian Islam. Innumerable lamps were lighted by the one kindled by Shah Sahib. Sir Syed and his reformist friends also largely borrowed from Shah Waliullah.

Various possibilities, and often mutually contradictory possibilities, were hidden in Shah Waliullah's thought. One of them was explored by Sir Syed and it was that of presenting the justification of Islam with new and powerful arguments drawn from contemporary knowledge. Sir Syed, tried to drag this possibility to its logical limit, but unluckily in many cases this logical extreme ended in not very meaningful apology. In his enthusiasm to prove the truth of Islam, Sir Syed reached a stage where Islam appeared to be anticipater of many things contemporary. Sir Syed had a vision for coming to terms with his time but his equipment to translate this vision into a well-knit system was rather limited. The reaction which followed his new interpretation of Islam, instead of making him more convinced of his attitude made him abandon the whole attempt, in the name of making his new venture of founding a new educational institution a success. It is not improbable that Sir Syed very soon realised the inadequacy of his intellectual resources compared to the magnitude of the challenge.

A very significant and relveant opposition was voiced by eloquent Shibli who without disturbing the links of tradition tried to found a new scholasticism. He was himself a rationalist like Sir Syed in matters theological but had a romantic conception of history on account of which the idea of reviving the old glory of Islam was not outside the limits of possibility for him. If Sir Syed was a realist in his conception of history, Shibli was a pure romantic. History was, for him, the study of the lives of the heroes of history. In his attempt to reconstruct a new 'Kalam', he revived the old controversies of medieval Islam. He, like Sir Syed, was deeply conscious of

the crisis which Islam was facing, but he too was unequal to the challenge posed by the contemporary world. However, by virtue of his artistic temperament Shibli soon realized the poverty of his new scholasticism. In his last days he turned his attention to that original source which has always inspired the faithful and perhaps his work on "the life of the Prophet" *Secrat-ul Nabi* was an expression of the feeling of despair in him. These scholastic attempts pointed to the need for a more effective agent to make Islam a more dynamic force in India ; one which is not determined by mere logical necessity but one which could directly motivate human institution and bring it closer to that fountain wherefrom various brooks of culture, sufism, law and scholasticism originate.

This second possibility of Shah Waliullah's thought was completely ignored by his immediate successors. On the one hand, his learned son, Shah Abdul Azeez, busied himself with the writing of *Toeagh-a-Asna-Ishriya*, the refutation of the Shia doctrine; and on the other, his other disciples fell victim to that onesided attachment to tradition, which was not unmixed with a certain "Mythology", so vehemently and so passionately that the rising liberal-minded intellectuals were terrified by this fanatical movement, one of the offshoots of which was the obscurantist 'Deoband School'. If the main purpose of the original Waliullahi movement was to present Islam in its original undistorted form and to give an exposition of the real purposes of the 'faith' not with the help of Kalam but in the light of the Book itself, then it can be said without any exaggeration that the possibility was best realized by Abul Kalam Azad.

By his profound learning and rare intelligence Azad did a real good job for Islam by clearing the dust of prejudice and bigotry which had gathered upon it in layers during the long years of its history in India. He was not only influenced by all those thought movements which have been described above but was a rightful inheritor of all these and other schools of the past. His efforts in this direction helped present a better picture of Islam with its basic feeling for humanity and its concern for the destiny of man. In the unfolding of his intellectual life and in the evolution of his thought we

find staged the whole history of Islamic thought. His intellectual life represents a very fine example of 'thought' and 'reflection' which according to Quran are the certain means of Divine Vision. His personality was a meeting point of various and sometimes opposite currents. While he was a fine example of the old traditional scholastic education which, though magnificent, was limited, he was also, with the exception of Iqbal, the only religious thinker who had the authentic knowledge of the modern trends and was conscious of the deep crisis which had engulfed not only Islam but religion as such. He was also acquainted with the philosophies of India which is really unparalleled in recent Muslim scholarship. He had a deep insight into the various religions of the world and could isolate the real and essential from the spurious.

### Azad's Intellectual Struggle

This blending of the old and the new in him was outcome of an intense intellectual struggle. He passed through the stages of intense dogmatism, then scepticism followed by denial and repudiation and then a real rapprochement. In his own words, 'There is no positive conviction of my heart which was not pricked by all the thorns of doubt and there is no belief of my soul which has not passed through all the tests of unbelief and denial'. His passage through the realms of doubt, refusal, and spiritual unrest—which is what a sufi would call one's journey to the hell—endows Azad with a real and authentic self which could rise to the heights of universality and participate in the anguish of man in his search after certainty. It seems he had aspired for what is called 'secondary revelation' and this aspiration, and search opens the gateways of true aesthetic inspiration. It is because of this aesthetic element that we find in the 'mature Azad' a blending of religious thought and sublime poetry, which although did not manifest itself in written poetry but made the thinker aware of the anguish of the truly religious. This poetic element elevates him from the narrowness of thought which had so ruthlessly bound those who had a similar mission that is to present the Faith in its purity, and the original attitude of the early believers. An outstanding result of this poetic element is that

moment when he seems to be an incarnation of the fury of Ahmed Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taimiyya. On account of the same poetic attitude, the instructor of Ma'ruf and the repudiator of Munkar which once he was, he finds himself in sympathy with the mystic poet Sarmad in his conflict with Aurangzeb. This admiration seems to be the result of his ability to participate in the anguish of the seeker. His religious insight warns him against that stern attitude which is not so much the product of concern for real orthodoxy but is the product of that fanaticism which does not distinguish between growth, innovation and heresy. The attempts to purify the Faith have failed not because of the weakness of the Faith itself but because of the narrowness of the vision of the purifiers who in their zeal for purification were not able to understand that the real and the Timeless grows only in history and real purification must intend at separating the really historical from the spurious and thus transcending historical itself.

The aesthetic intuition which comes very near to the religious vision, enabled Azad to see the real Divinity in his Grace and Benevolence (*Rehmat-o-Rabubiyya*). This was for him, the key to the understanding of the Book. The life of the Prophet was a comprehensive realization of this Divine attribute in the historical life of a man. Azad makes a fine distinction between Islam as a vision and Islam as a historical growth and therefore does not occupy himself with the problems of the historical Islam. He did offer his services for any conciliation between the different schisms of Islam but refused to identify himself with any existing schism. Professor Gibb is of the opinion that the Arab mind is intensely imaginative and highly romantic. It is essentially anti-classical, according to him. Azad's mind positively reveals these traits. It was on account of this imaginativeness and romanticism that he succeeded in understanding the true essence of the Quran wherein emphasis has been laid not so much on the discursive logic but on the direct appeal to the intuitive faculty of man. In matters of religion Azad's method is not, like that of Shibli, scholastic but is largely intuitive and at times reaches the poetic. He is not satisfied with a religion "which comes before us wearing dull cloak of logic and rationality and appeals more to our heads than stir the strings

of our heart. Again according to him, "We cannot contend merely on the assumptions which we can test and verify and therefore accept, we need also things which we cannot prove but which are so formidable that we can never refute them. "That means the religious truth is not a conclusion of a syllogism but the first and primary unproven premise itself. This first unproven premise is common to all religions and therefore there is a real basis for the unity of all religions on this common basis.

### Early Writings of Azad

This search for the essential forms the basic vision of Azad. It was more like a vision than a thought-out conclusion. It was on account of this state of mind that Azad developed that literary style which looks more prophetic than logical. His early religious writings remind the reader of the utterances of the ancient Semitic Prophets. This romantic fury of the earlier writings gives place to a more restrained expression in his 'magnum opus' *The Tarjumanal-Quran*, but the essential romanticism still dominates, which as Gibb suggests is the chief characteristic of the Arab mind. But this romanticism in the *Tarjuman* is not a mere tempest of unruly emotions, as it was to a certain extent in his early writings of *Al-Hilal*. In the *Tarjuman* we find, instead, a harmonious fusion of imagination and restrained understanding. This blend of imagination and intellect gives him a very prominent place among the other theologians and religious writers. In this unique fusion, perhaps lies his individuality and the basis of his neo-orthodoxy.

The state of mind which is here called Neo-orthodoxy is not a mere return to simple orthodoxy but is an attempt to renew the old in an imaginative-intellectual manner by re-creating the experience itself which is the source of religion. It is not an attempt to construct the idea of God rationally but to make it felt intuitively. Intellectual proof or disproof is simply irrelevant. Man is made conscious of the Divine presence, in Azad's *Tarjuman--al-Quran*, by re-awakening in him the idea of the Divine Concern in man. This is the meaning of the term '*Rububiyya*', which is according to Azad

the central concept of the Quran. His commentary of *Suratul Fatiha* is the unfolding of this central concept. *Tarjumanal Quran* seems to be the result of this discovery, because in his earlier writings God appears more like Jehovah than a benevolent and merciful God who is concerned with the whole of humanity.

The young Azad, the author of *Tazkara*,—though averse to treading the beaten path—is not yet matured to discover the humanistic import of Quran. He is aggressive and bears a crusader's spirit. Hence, when he mentions the names of those scholars who resisted power, he is at the height of his fiery expression. His total personality is that of a crusader, whether he writes on contemporary politics or on the old problems of the theology. Law is, still, the most important category of religion and living according to Law is the essence of religious life. His ideal in 'Tazkara' is Ibn Taimiyya who is the symbol of fundamentalist approach to Islam. Even when he admires the early Madaviya movement, his admiration is evoked on account of its adherence to Law or Shari'ah and he quietly misses a very important aspect of this movement, its emphasis on the inward aspect of religion, i.e. man's aspiration to have a direct vision of God. He is still a revivalist whose love for the remote past of Islam is stamped with a romantic attitude. But gradually one feels a fusion taking place between his poetic attitude and scholarship, between his romanticism and intellectualism. May be his rich experience in political life together with his studies of the Western literature and English added new dimensions to his thought. One may also imagine that his new political vision was also determined by his new religious insight which gives much more importance to the humanistic possibilities of the teachings of Islam.

### Indian National Movement

There is a very important question which is still obscure. Was the devotion of Azad to Indian National movement the result of his new religious awakening or his religious consciousness was a result of his deep involvement in politics which opened new avenues of thought to this keen student of religion and human affairs? He, it seems, for the first time realized

that human history has reached a stage when human beings of different faiths and religions have to live together without trying to convert each other to their viewpoint either by force of political authority or by the persuasive force of scholastic scholarship. The Azad of the earlier phase still seems to cherish the ideal of forming a 'true' Islamic society based on the principles of The Book and Sunnah and himself becoming the accepted leader or 'Ameer' of such a community. Later he simply abandoned this idea and never explained the reasons of abandonment. I am inclined to believe that a great and profound religious and spiritual transformation took place in the mind of Azad during the days of his forced withdrawal from active life when he was interned in Ranchi and the result was a new Azad who had discovered a clue to the understanding of Islam. He was able to hold fast to the true orthodox basis of Islam and to find a new solution to the political situation of the country. The second aspect is beyond the perview of the present discussion. Even conceding the influence of political events on the development of his thought it must be recognised that he never let the political, events determine the course of the development of his thought, in other words he did not let politics capture his religious thought. His insight into the real and timeless Islam stops him from joining that chorus of anti-Westernism which denounces new science and new modes of political thinking. On the contrary, his orthodox religious outlook leads to that fundamental discovery that Islam cannot be tied up to a particular culture or a particular phase of history. The true essence of Islam, in the words of Iqbal, was lost in the traditions of culture, sufism, law and Kalam, and Iqbal was very much upset by this development. But in this regard Islam was not the only religion which had to face the passage of time. The very same thing has happened to every established religion when it confronted the stormy currents of history and culture. Azad, luckily, solved this riddle. According to him, it is the basic teaching of the Quran that, Islam or The Faith *All-Deen-ul-Islam* is the name of that fundamental spirit of every historical religion which had gradually been engulfed by forces of history and where reality had been dimmed in the mist of human superstition and man's habit of myth-making. Discussing the meaning of Divine Guid-

ance he explains the meaning of that special Guidance which is named in Quran as *Al-Huda*.

### Interpretation of Quran

According to Azad *Al-Huda* is the universal guidance of Divine Revelation vouchsafed to one and all from the beginning without distinction. It (Quran) says that even as instincts, senses and reason are provided to man without distinction of race or colour or circumstances, the directive force of Divine Guidance is meant to afford guidance to every one without distinction, and has to be distinguished from all other forms of so-called guidances which have become exclusive preserves of particular communities and have divided mankind into a variety of religious groups. It gives to this Universal guidance of Revelation the name of *Al-Din*, or the Religion, or way of life appropriate to the nature and function of man, or Islam." According to him again, the unity or religion is the great truth which forms "the primary basis of the Quranic call. Every thing else that the Quran presents rests on it." He deplores that history has forgotten this important lesson of Quran. He further complains that "No other truth of the Quran has been kept so deliberately out of sight than this." Azad believes that the aim of every one of them (the religions) was to gather those who stood divided. It was never meant to keep them isolated from each other. The primary purpose was to see that all mankind served but one God and lived together in mutual love and affection.

In his commentary of the Quran he develops the idea that real intention of religion is to assert the oneness of God and the unity of mankind. In his own words, "The unity of man is the primary aim of religion. The message which every prophet delivered was that mankind were in reality one people and the one community, and there was but one God for all of them, and on that account they should serve Him together and live as members of but one family. Such was the message which every religion delivered. But curiously the followers of each religion disregarded the message, so much so, that every country, every community and every race resolved itself into a separate entity and raised groupism to the

position of religion. *Din* or the real religion was thus devotion to God and righteous living. It was not a name for group formation. Whatever the race or community or country one belonged to, if only he believed in God and did righteous deeds, he was a follower of the *Din* of God, and salvation was his reward.

Azad studies the Quran from this basic stand point and finds nothing in the Quran which contradicts it. According to him the real objectives of the Quran are the following three principles :

“1. It made faith and deed the sole means of salvation, and not affiliation to any particular group.

2. It emphasised the fact that the religion revealed by God was but one for all mankind, and that therefore every deviation from this was a clear aberation.

3. It emphasised that real religion was direct worship of but one God without any mediating agency, and that this was the main teaching of all prophets, and that every belief and practice which conflicted with it was therefore a deviation from it and indeed a denial of it.”

It is the essence of the true Faith and it is Al-Islam. Every thing else is, according to him, man-made and the Quran calls the *Din* of God Al Islam because it means acquisscence.

The internal unity of the religions which Azad lays stress on was not an absolutely novel idea in the history of Islamic thought. Among the later scholars of Islam Shah Waliullah had made suggestions about it but the vigour and the power of argument with which Azad developed this principle in his *Tarjumanal Quran* is, without any exaggeration, unparalleled in the Islamic literature. Unity of Faith is his central idea, but it does not mean that all historical religions as they exist today are true or that there is truth in every religion, which is a form of barren cosmopolitanism but that “All religions as originally delivered are true.” But, Azad insists that this point has been neglected by

the followers of all historical religions and therefore all the religions have an element of falsehood in them which comes from the habit of human beings to form themselves into separate groups.

A revolutionary conclusion which follows from these premises would be that, the so-called Islam i.e. the Islam as it is understood by a common Muslim, is no exception. Just as the followers of other religions have lost their way so have the Muslims lost the vision or the Faith or the spirit of Al-Islam. If the distinction between Islam as the underlying spirit of all historical religions and Islam as a historical religion itself is valid, then the above conclusion is also valid.

If Azad had stopped on this point, he would have certainly lost his orthodox position and would have joined the modernist liberal. As he developed his argument he finds one more essential element of faith and that is belief in the prophets. From the Quranic injunction of non-discrimination between prophets of God, Azad draws the conclusion that denial or repudiation of one true prophet is synonymous with the denial of all. This was a delicate point because Islam as a historical religion either stands or falls on the acceptance or rejection of Mohammad as a true and final prophet of God. When the unintelligent critics of Azad protested against the concept of the unity of the religions they were, perhaps, mixing the ideal with the real. With his insistence on the acceptance of all the prophets with any reservation, he is meeting the demands of orthodoxy at a higher level. It is higher because, according to Azad, Quran does not cancel the validity of the earlier faiths but only removes the veils of racial and group prejudices and emphasizes the unity and brotherhood of man based on the unity of God.

### Essential Unity of Religions

Azad's faith in the essential unity of religions is not the product of that intellectual lethargy which cannot appreciate real differences. He speaks in the Quranic language and invites all mankind to unite on the basis of that common

principle without which a higher religion is inconceivable i.e. the unity of God. In other words, Azad revives the real message of the Prophet Mohammad himself. But at this place there is a parting of ways between him and the so-called revivalists. The revivalist tries to revive not only the message but also makes a hopeless attempt to revive the institutions which were once linked up with the message or the particular expressions of the message at a historical time and which lose the validity with the passage of time.

What is the nature of these institutions? They are directly connected with that aspect of religion which is called law or Shar'ah. Azad's real contribution consists in clearly defining the difference between *Din* and law, or Shar'ah. The division of Faith into many religions starts with the identification of these two aspects i.e. *Din* and *Shar'ah*. The followers of the different religions tend to forget the real message of the revealed religion, and the law of the practical way is over-emphasised. The emphasis is shifted from the 'end' to the 'means'. The Quran in one of the verses, explains the 'raison de etre' of these differences in the laws as an expression of the Divine law itself. It says, "For each we have appointed a divine law and traced out the way. Had Allah willed He could have made you one community. But that He may try you by that which He hath given you He made you as ye are. So vie one with another in good works. Unto Allah ye will all return, and will then inform you of that wherein ye differ" (5/48) Quran accepts the existential differences of the human behaviour, and instead of wishing them away it reminds men of different faiths that they will all return to God. It is a recurrent theme of the Quran. Azad has accordingly given it a prominent place in his commentary on the Quran. It is not exactly a new idea.

Among the Indian writers it was Shah Waliullah who touched it and gave a historical explanation of these differences. He writes, "the Prophet's method is to train one particular people and to use them as nucleus for the building up of a universal *Shariah*. In doing so he accentuates the principles underlying the social life of all mankind, and applies them to concrete cases in the light of the specific habits of the people immediately before him. The *Shariah* values (*Ahkam*)

resulting from this application (e.g. rules relating to penalties of crime) are in a sense specific to that people : and since their observance is not an end in itself, they cannot be strictly enforced in the case of future generations.

“But Shah Sahib’s motive is different from that of Azad, because Shah Waliullah is interested in explaining the limits of applying the tradition and the range of creative thinking. Azad, on the other hand, is interested in explaining the differences among the religious groups themselves. To use his own words, “The Quran says that differences in respect of religion are of two kinds. One is that which is the result of a deliberate deviation from the common basic message effected by its followers. A difference of this type marks only the nature of waywardness wrought and does not argue any differences between religions as such. The other kind is a difference in regulations arising therefrom. For instance, one religion prescribes a particular form of worship; another a different form. A difference of this nature is not a difference touching the basic character of a religion, but a difference touching its outward manifestation.” He further elaborates this point. The Quran points out that the teaching of a religion is two fold. One constitutes its spirit; the other its outward manifestation. The former is primary in its importance, the latter secondary. The first is called *Din*; the second *Sharia* or *Minhaj* and *Nask*. *Sharia* and *Minhaj* mean the path; and *Nask* the manner or ceremonial of devotion.” In practice, however, *Sharia* has come to mean the law prescribed by religion and *Nask* merely the form of devotion or worship. The Quran states that the differences which exist between one religion and another are not differences in *Din*, the basic provision, but in the manner of giving effect to it, or in the *Shar’a* and *Minhaj*, not in the spirit of religion, but in its outward form. The difference was but natural. The essential purpose of religion as law is the progress and well-being of humanity. But the condition and circumstance of man have not been the same in every clime and at all times.

In other words, Azad gives a sociological explanation of these existing differences. Man cannot help those differences which are necessitated by the laws of social growth and the compulsions of human nature and therefore the best way would be to revive the essential and leave the unessential untou-

ched. In non-theological circles it will be an important but a purely theoretical issue but for the religious world it has a tremendous practical importance. It is a problem of prime importance for the Muslim world which aspires to make Islam and the laws of Islam a concrete reality. It is in a sense an important source of tension in the contemporary Muslim world. Is Islam, basically, a law or a vision? Azad's answer is clear. Islam is a vision and its laws are the manifestations of this vision. The revival of the message is meaningful if by this revival the message and not its outward manifestations, is intended. This discussion should not mislead one to believe that Azad considered that the laws of Islam, as they are revealed in the Book, are obsolete or they need any revision by the modern world. He is simply maintaining the priority of vision over law, and nothing more. This vision is not an exclusive property of any religious group. It is the basis of all religions. In the Quranic language, it is the vision of Abraham:

“The Jews say: “Be a Jew”. The Christians say: “Be a Christian; you will be on the right course” Say: Nay, (We follow) the religion of Abraham, the upright one, and he was not one of the polytheists.” (2 : 129)

Revival of the message of Abraham is the recurrent theme of the Quran, and it is on this basis that early Islam wanted to unite the people of the Books and through them the whole of humanity. The real aim of religion is the spiritual transformation of man and law is a guide or a means for such a spiritual transformation. The greatness of Islam does not consist in the special legal structure but in its acceptance of the fundamental truth that God is one and mankind is one community. Islam accepts all the scriptures and makes it obligatory on all not to make any discrimination between the prophets. This was indeed a revolutionary idea. The ‘medieval’ Islam was so much tied up with law and the legal schools that the real mission of the Prophet of Islam was seldom emphasised. If the traditionalists had over-emphasised the legal and the outward aspect, the modernists have gone to the other extreme of making the Quranic law merely relative. The Quran is a revealed Book and there is nothing in the Book which is not relevant to human well being. Man has

to obey the divine law, if he is to be regarded a true Muslim, because Islam means complete submission to the will of God. This is the orthodox position and Azad agrees with the orthodox. But he does not agree with those who consider the enforcement of this law to be the real mission of Islam. The real mission of Islam is to raise man to that spiritual level where he surrenders his will to God. In the orthodoxy of Azad we find a fusion of the orthodox and the sufi ways. The conflict between the orthodox and the sufi ways is a conflict of two polar concepts of law and love. A healthy religious life demands that this tension is resolved. Law can never become an end in itself and love, to become authentic, must have a form. *Shariah* provides such a form to love. It is to make devotion to God meaningful that adherence to law is necessary, but the true ends of religion are not to be sought in law alone. Azad presents the true ends of religion without undermining the importance of the outward aspects of religion. The modernists disregard the legal aspect of Islam or *Shari'ah*. Azad in this sense is not a modernist, he is a true orthodox. No verse of the Quran supersedes the other, according to him, and no verse of the Quran is obsolete. What is needed most is to change the religious perspective and shift one's gaze to the essential and make religion a unifying force rather than make it an instrument of dividing humanity which already suffers so much division,

# **Abu'l Kalam Azad's Theory Of Nationalism**

**Hafees Malik**

After Sir Saiyyad Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) three men- Iqbal, (1873-1938), Jinnah, (1875-1949) and Azad, (1888-1958) greatly influenced the Muslim mind in India. Iqbal and Jinnah appeared on the political horizon as nationalist Muslims ; they were Indian first and Muslims afterwards. However, they ended their political careers as Muslim nationalists, staunch supporters of Pakistani nationalism. Azad on the contrary, made his triumphal entrance into Muslim intellectual life as a Muslim nationalist (1906-1920) who could not think in terms of political collaboration with the Hindus. He ended his life as an Indian nationalist, who would be no part of Pakistan. These three men symbolize the two intellectual streams of Muslim thought in the post-Sir Saiyyad period of Indian politics.

Whereas most people understood the political changes taking place in Iqbal and Jinnah, Azad's political views remained ambiguous, and caused misunderstanding among his followers and foes. His followers believed all along in Azad's views of 1906-1920, but failed to detect the metamorphosis in Azad's mind caused by his reaction to the Caliphate debacle. His foes (who were essentially his former followers) especially in the late thirties and forties, accused him of a betrayal of Muslim nationalism ; whereas he had long since ceased to espouse this nationalism.

## **Azad : A Muslim Nationalist**

Abul Kalam Azad made his political debut in 1906, when he joined the Muslim League at its first session. The Muslim League had come into existence

largely through the efforts of the leaders of the Aligarh school. Azad was, as he himself admitted, influenced by the writings of Sir Saiyyad Ahmad Khan, the founder of Aligarh Muslim University. However, Azad soon realized that Sir Saiyyad's policies had outlived their usefulness. Sir Saiyyad, it will be recalled, had prevented the Muslims from participating in political activity, and had consistently followed a pro-British course. Azad thought that this strategy should be abandoned and that Muslims ought to participate in the political life of the country ; he decided to uproot the idea of loyalty to the British rule from the Muslim mind. For this purpose in June, 1912 Azad announced the publication of a weekly called *al-Hilal* (the Crescent).

From 1912 to 1920, Azad's views were clearly those of a Muslim nationalist. These views created for him a devoted following among Muslims and are of great interest to a student of the intellectual history of India. A Muslim correspondent asked Azad the following questions about his political program : a) Should Muslims continue to follow the traditional policy (presumably abstaining from politics) ; b) Should they adopt the ways of moderate Hindu leaders who demanded more political rights within the framework of the British Empire ; Or (c) Should they emulate the Hindu anarchists of Bengal. The correspondent also asked Azad to distinguish between his political views and religious convictions, and to indicate his personal political preferences.<sup>1</sup>

On September 8, 1912, in an article entitled *Al-Hilal Ka Maqsid Aur Political Ta'lim* (*Al-Hilal's Aims and Political Education*), Azad answered these questions comprehensively. He refused to separate his political views from the framework of Islam, and asserted that Islam brought an exalted and all-inclusive social order for mankind. "It is regrettable," said Azad, "that Muslims (of today) have not seen Islam at its zenith. If they had, they would not be bowing their heads in subjection to the Hindus."<sup>2</sup> He declared unequivocally that the aim of *al-Hilal* was to exhort Muslims to follow the book of Allah and the Shari'a of the Prophet.

Discussing the policies of the two Hindu political groups,

the moderates and the anarchists, Azad stated that he did not advocate either of them. "Islam is so exalted a religion," declared Azad, that "its followers are not constricted to ape the Hindus for the formulation of their political policy. There cannot be a greater shame for the Muslims than to bow their heads before others for political education. Muslims need not join any (political) party. They were the leaders of the world. If they would submit to God, the entire world would submit to them."<sup>3</sup>

Azad's policy during this period was lack of trust in the British Government and non-cooperation with the Hindus. As far as concrete political aims were concerned, he urged the Muslims to strive for political liberty with a responsible parliamentary system. Azad also disapproved of those who were seeking the Hindus' collaboration in the effort to win political freedom from the British. Discussing the problems of "self-reliance" and "self-awareness" among the Muslims, Azad maintained that

Hindus can, like other nations, revive their self awareness and national consciousness on the basis of secular nationalism, but it is indeed not possible for Muslims. Their nationality is not inspired by the racial or geographical exclusivity; it transcends all man-made barriers—Europe may be inspired by the concepts of "nation", and "homeland", Muslims can seek inspiration for self-awareness only from God and Islam.<sup>4</sup>

Azad's concept of nationalism included not only the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent but embraced Muslims all-over the world. He was undoubtedly primarily concerned with the socio-political problems of the Indian Muslims, yet he considered himself a citizen of the International Islamic Brotherhood, which was then known as the Turkish Caliphate. When the Turkish Caliphate collided with the British Empire during World War I Azad had no difficulty in declaring his loyalty to the Turkish sovereign.

He believed that Islamic solidarity could be maintained only by the Caliph, therefore, he considered obedience to the

Caliph mandatory. The Quran says :

O ye believers  
Obey God, and obey the Apostle,  
and those charged  
with Authority among you  
If ye differ in anything  
Among yourself, refer it  
To God and His Apostle  
If ye do believe in God

(Sura IV : 59)

In this *ayat* God enjoins Muslims to obey three powers in their descending importance : God, the Prophet Muhammad and "those charged with authority" among Muslims. Azad believed that the last category was a reference to the Caliph, who was responsible for enforcing the *Shari'a*.<sup>5</sup>

Having established the frame of reference in which he viewed the Caliphate, Azad then turned to the Ottoman Caliphs. The Ottoman Sultan Salim conquered Syria and Egypt in 1517. Azad believed that Sultan Salim had received an oath of *bai'a* (allegiance) from the last Abbasid Caliph al-Matwwakal, and had, in this way obtained the privileges and powers of the Caliph. Since then the Islamic world had acknowledged the Ottoman Sultans as the Caliphs.<sup>6</sup>

Azad realized that the Mughal sovereigns in India had claimed caliphal titles. However, he drew a subtle line of demarcation between their claims, which were regional, and the universally recognized caliphal titles of the Ottoman Sultans. From this line of reasoning it would follow that the Muslims of India owed a dual allegiance ; one to their Mughal rulers in India and another to the Turkish Caliph. Therefore he reasoned that the Muslims of India had no occasion to transfer their allegiance to the Sultan of Turkey after 1857 ; it was merely emphasized by the official termination of the Mughal Empire.

In the 1920's the question was raised as to how the Muslims of India could render effective aid to their Turkish

Caliph. Azad deduced enough authority in the Quran to support the policies of the Indian Caliphate Committee. In March, 1920, the Caliphate Committee sent a deputation to London to demand the maintenance that while Turkey was to be allowed to retain ethnically Turkish lands, she was to lose those provinces which were not Turkish. This position struck at the heart of the Caliphate sentiment of the Muslims in India. March 19, 1920 was fixed as a day of national mourning, a day of fasting, prayer and strikes.

It was at this stage that Mahatma Gandhi appeared on the scene. Mahatma Gandhi was naturally concerned about the extra-territorial allegiance of the Muslims as it was being expressed in the Caliphate agitation. The programme of Hindu-Muslim cooperation worked out by Gandhi diverted the Caliphate Movement into the channel of the Indian struggle for independence. Azad now had to face the task of convincing the Muslims that in the struggle for the Caliphate, cooperation with non-Muslims was permissible according to Islamic law. He accordingly divided non-Muslims into two categories ; those who had no desire to invade Muslim lands, but instead lived in harmony with Muslims ; and the enemies of Muslims.

“The first category of non-Muslims deserves,” Azad believed, “the goodwill and constructive cooperation of the Muslims. However, if Muslims were to have friendly transactions with the second category of non-Muslims, they would be counted as enemies of Allah and the *Shari’a*. Azad presented the following quotation from the Quran to support his argument :

God forbids you not, as regards those who have not fought you in Religion's cause, nor expelled you from your habitations, that you should be kindly to them..... God only forbids you as to those who have fought you in Religion's cause, and expelled you from your habitations, and supported your expulsion, that you should take them for friends. (*Sura LX : 8,9*)

Applying the dictum of the Quran to the Indian situa-

tion, Azad implied that the Hindus had never invaded a Muslim land, nor killed Muslims for their religious faith, nor supported their expulsion from any country.<sup>7</sup> Thus Azad sanctified Hindu-Muslim partnership in the non-cooperation movement against the British Government. Muslims *enmasse* joined the Indian National Congress for the first time since its inception, and the general slogan *Hindu-Musalman Ki Jai*, was heard everywhere.

Although Azad was to a large extent responsible for swelling the ranks of the Indian National Congress with Muslims, his allegiance to the Congress at this time was not based on consideration of a common Indian Hindu-Muslim nationality. He welcomed the help of the Mahatma and the Congress because it aided in the struggle for the Caliphate. However, after World War I his viewpoint radically changed.

### Azad : A Nationalist Muslim

After World War I Mustafa Kamal Ataturk abolished the Caliphate. Arab nationalism, appealing to all Arabs on the basis of language and common history and culture regardless of racial and denominational affiliation, also asserted itself. These events greatly impressed Azad, and his notions of nationality consequently underwent drastic changes. In the post-1920 period Azad ceased to be a Muslim nationalist; he accepted the fundamental principles of Arab and Turkish (Secular and territorial) nationalisms and rigorously applied them to the political situation in India.

Addressing a provincial assembly of the Caliphate Movement in Agra on October 25, 1921, he carried the point of Hindu-Muslim cooperation to its extreme. He referred to the "Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad" between the Muslims, the inhabitants of Medina and the Jews. The covenant was negotiated by the parties some time after the entrance (622 A. D.) of the Prophet Muhammad into Medina, Its purpose was to establish a working alliance for the common defence of the adherents of the Prophet and the Jews, against the hostile Quraish, who had persecuted the Prophet in Mecca and forc-

ed him to emigrate to Medina. The preamble of the Covenant stated :

In the name of God, the compassionate, the Merciful. This is a document from Muhammad, the Prophet (governing the relations) between the believers and Muslims of Quraysh and Yathrib (al-Medina), and those who followed them and joined them and laboured with them. They are one community,<sup>8</sup> (Umma-i-Wahida) to the exclusion of all men.<sup>9</sup>

Azad's rendition of the key phrase *Umma-i-Wahida* gives it a connotation that is different from any of those which are generally accepted. He renders the translation as follows : "We enter into an agreement and truce with all tribes inhabiting the suburbs of Medina, and we together want to constitute a nation." Explaining his translation, Azad says that *Umma* means nation, (i. e. *qom*) and *Wahida* means one.<sup>10</sup>

The application of the Covenant as a historical precedent to the political situation between the Hindus and the Muslims might have been analogous to cooperation with the Hindus in the Caliphate Movement. However, Azad's clever translation could hardly have made it a sound basis for evolving a joint Hindu-Muslim nation in the Indian sub-continent. Historically the Prophet's Covenant failed to preserve amicable relations between the Jews of Medina and his adherents. The Jews collaborated with the Quraish of Mecca and thus commenced the hostilities that resulted in their expulsion from Arabia.<sup>11</sup>

Azad was aware of the collapse of the cooperation between the Jews and the Prophet but he interprets these events *de novo*. He says that if the Jews were expelled from Arabia it was in consonance with the Divine Will, because the land of Arabia was ordained to be the exclusive preserve of Islam, so that if Muslims were ever uprooted from the other countries of the world they might remain rooted in Arabia. This does not mean, according to Azad, that the purport of the Covenant of the Prophet was cancelled for all other nations of the world.<sup>12</sup>

The impact of Arab nationalism was overwhelming for

Azad. Delivering an address to an All-India Caliphate Conference in Cawnpur on December 29, 1925, he reviewed the political changes which had taken place in the Middle East. He deplored the fact that the Hindu-Muslim rapprochement had ended and that instead riots were frequent in India. He said that while the Middle Eastern countries were progressing rapidly politically, Indian politics had taken a reactionary turn.

Like India, the population of Syria is also heterogeneous. There are Muslims, Christians of different sects and Druze tribes in Syria, who for centuries used to cut each other's throats. The mention of the notorious crusades is enough to conjure up floods of blood that once swept over the Middle East. Nevertheless all Syrians are today united for the liberation of their country and their slogan is religion is for God and the homeland is for everyone.

Comparing Syrians with Indians, Azad remarked "Unfortunately from the viewpoint of education and political maturity, even our most advanced classes are not prepared to go that far, (to the extent of accepting the implications of the Arab national slogan). Religious bigotry, class friction, and communal prejudices are still blocking the way of national progress."<sup>13</sup>

It is therefore no wonder that outstanding Hindu leaders like C. Rajagopalachari regard Azad as one who "represents the keen understanding and synthetic ideology of the Great Akbar." Rajagopalachari appreciated the liberality of Azad's beliefs, but he also realized their utter unacceptability to the average Muslim in India. "If ever Akbar was disappointed by his fellow-Mussalmans, why should we be surprised if Maulana Abul Kalam received no response from the organised Muslims of India today."<sup>14</sup>

Maulana Azad's influence was considerable and he remained quite popular with certain segments of Muslim society, such as that represented by the Deoband school and Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind. However, he became decidedly unpopular among the multitude of the Muslim nation. Muslims

who had looked upon him at the turn of the century as a beacon of hope and savior turned away from him disillusioned in the forties. Jawaharlal Nehru, who knew him intimately, put the matter in a nutshell when he observed that "he (Azad) is essentially the scholar whom circumstances have forced into a life of action<sup>15</sup>".

Azad maintained a scholar's indifference to the opinion of the common men, yet he hoped that the Muslim nation would harken to him as it had before the Caliphate Movement. He did not try to feel the pulse of the nation that had developed intense feelings of Pakistani nationalism. While Muslims under the leadership of Jinnah, passed the Pakistan Resolution in 1940 at Lahore, Azad, in his presidential address to the Indian National Congress's Ramgarh Session in the same year, reiterated his pride in being an Indian. "I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality", declared Azad. "I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure of India is incomplete. I am an essential element which has gone to build India. I can never surrender this claim<sup>16</sup>".

Azad was unjustly accused by many Muslims of hypocrisy but this was unjust because there was no dichotomy in his pronouncements and actions at any given time. Azad was only guilty of expecting the Muslim nation to follow his change of heart. The pathos of the situation lies in the fact that after the 1920's he and the Muslim nation ceased to recognize each other.

### Notes and References

1. Abul Kalam Azad. *Muzamin-i-Abul Kalam Azad*. (Delhi : Hindustani Publishing House, 1944), p. 14.
2. *Ibid.* p. 17.
3. *Ibid.* p. 25.
4. *Ibid.* p. 87

5. Abul Kalam Azad, *Masla-i-Khilafat*. (Lahore : Maktaba-i-Ahbab, Wasanpura, n.d.), pp. 19-25.
6. *Ibid* p. 183.
7. *Ibid* P. 300
8. Abd-al-Malik Ibn Hish'am, *Kitaò Sirat Rasul Allah*. Dr. Ferdinand Wustenfeld, Ed. (Gottingen : Dieterichsche Universitats-Buchhandlung, 1858), P. 341.
9. Muir, however translates it thus : "The Jewish clans in allegiance with the several tribes of Medina are one people with the Believers." cf Sir William Muir, *The Life Of Muhammad*. T. H. Weir, Ud., (Edinburg : John Grant, 1912), p. 184.
10. Abul Kalam Azad, *Khutbat-i-Abul Kalam Azad* (Lahore : al-Minara Academy, n. d.), p. 42
11. Shibli Nu'mani, *Sirat al-Nabi* (Azamgarh : Mat'ba-i-Mu'arif, 1955) Vol. I, pp, 421-433
12. Azad, *Khutbat-i-Abul Kalam Azad*. p. 44.
13. *Ibid* p. 271
14. Rajagopalachari, "The Great Akbar of Today" *Aspects of Abul Kalam Azad*. Abudullah Butt, Ed. (Lahore : Maktaba-i-Urdu, 1942) p. 67
15. Jawaharlal Nehru, "An Universal Politician," *Aspects of Abul Kalam Azad*, p. 32.
16. Azad, *Khutbat-i-Azad*, p. 317

# **The Maulana in the Indian Politics**

**N. A. Kurundkar**

The unflinching faith that we had in our leaders we did not need to assess or examine till the dawn of independence. But in the post-independence era, we have been deeply engrossed in the endless discussions of the political problems and their solutions. The Maulana and his leadership were, however, things we never dwelt on. So far there has been no serious study of his mind and thought. When one starts to examine him critically in these days one is stirred by his extraordinary character. He should be revered for his patriotic spirit, his strength of character and his profound erudition. Merely as a political leader the Maulana is not less than a stupendous self-contradiction and an utter failure. It is really a pity that such a great worker and thinker as Maulana Azad should go to the life's last resting-place without leaving any striking impression on the minds of his people.

In the post-independence era, people ceased to talk of Maulana Azad. In Marathi, so also in English and Urdu, no biography of Maulana worth its name is available. Sometimes there has appeared in newspapers an article or two on his personality. But even in these we meet with either extreme applause or extreme censure ; never do we find any faithful account of his life and work.

The life of the Maulana in the post-independence period is somewhat pitiable. He was the Minister for Education in the Central Government of free India. Seeing his ability, achievement and seniority in the Congress, we cannot help feeling that he deserved more than the education ministry that was permanently thrust on him. On the death of Sardar Patel, the home-ministry was allotted, on criterion of seniority to Rajaji and then to Mr. Katju and Mr. Pant. After Sardar,

Maulana should have been offered the Deputy Prime Ministership, but it was not done. On the contrary, the very post was abolished. The Maulana had supported separate electorates as the Congress had from 1916 onwards. but he was not shown the courtesy of being consulted when it was abolished. Again he was not consulted in the vital decision and action on issues like Kashmir, Hyderabad and Bhopal.

It was the Maulana who proposed the acceptance of Hindi in Deonagri Script as the national language of India. In fact, for two decades before independence, the Congress had concurred with his view that Hindustani in both Debonaari and Persian Scripts would be the national language of free India. On independence, all his hopes were nipped in the bud. There was a growing sense in him that he was a minister in the Government of India at the mercy of some other people. And yet, in spite of all this, he continued to be a minister for the interests of Muslims in India. It is really a misfortune of Maulana to have lived for more than a decade in such a 'cribbed, cabined, and confined' condition, for he was one who had dreamt of the *Ummatul Waheda* (The Composite Nation Theory), had treasured the hope of it and was bent on its fulfilment.

I do not mean to say that all that has happened is wrong or sad but one thing is sure that when great decisions were taken, Maulana was not only ignored but was shown even utter distrust. Pandit Nehru, a very trusted friend of Maulana did not find it necessary to seek his counsel except on Muslim problems. It seemed as if he was considered only as a leader of the Muslims in India and would never be looked upon as one of the national leaders of free India. Why did Maulana meet with such a fate? An attempt to answer this question will reveal certain aspects of the present Hindu-Muslim problem.

The Maulana was born in a distinguished and learned religious family. There are a great number of such families in India, but they have never played, with enthusiasm and perseverance, any considerable role whatsoever in the political movements of the country. The reputation of Maulana's

family had stood out since the days of Akbar the Great. One of those renowned Muslim religious scholars who opposed Akbar on the grounds of religion, strove hard against the Emperor's new religion *Din-e-Illahi* and supported Prince Saleem in his revolt against his father, was Maulana Jamaluddin. Even before Akbar there were Muslim religious scholars who fought against their Muslim rulers on certain points and one of these was Shaikh-ul-Islam Sayyad Nuruddin Mubarak Gaznavi, a well-known scholar of his times. According to the Islamic concept of their history, the Muslims could conquer one-third of the known world in just sixty-five years only because they had faith in God and observed strict austerity in the practice of religion. So the conquered world was brought under the influence of Islam. But, in India, it took several centuries for the Muslims to conquer this land. And, having conquered it, why did the Muslims fail in establishing the Islamic Rule here? One of the reasons attributed to this by the Muslim religious scholars is that the Muslims here do not practise religion with any devotion; they are not sincere enough in their faith. Maulana Jamaluddin was leading this movement in the days of Akbar. Maulana Azad was born in the lineage of Maulana Jamaluddin.

Traditionally, Maulana's predecessors were regarded as the highest religious authority in Bengal. When the British established their rule in Bengal, the Muslim religious scholars made several attempts to rise against the British rule. Maulana Khairuddin, the father of Maulana Azad was a popular Imam of his times, whose disciples could be found in the different provinces of India. The various struggles of Ulemas against the British rule culminated in the final stroke—the Mutiny of 1857. After the Sepoys' War of 1857 ended in failure, Maulana Khairuddin, realizing that India was to be governed by the Non-muslims, left it once and for all and went to settle permanently in Mecca. There were other Muslim religious scholars who followed him. But all of them could not leave India to perform Hijra. Those who decided to live in India founded in 1867 'Deoband', an Institution that would impart Muslim religious instruction.

Deoband, a religious institution of the Muslims was the

chief source of power and inspiration of the Jamiat-UI-Ulema. The leaders and workers of Jamiat-UI-Ulema used to be either the students of Deoband or its teachers. Even to-day Deoband has continued to exist as a religious institution and is also working as an important centre of the Muslim communalism. Following his lineage, Maulana, too, was related to Deoband, for the founders of Deoband had faith in Maulana Khairuddin, who had abandoned India to live in Mecca. He got married there and Maulana Azad was born there itself in 1888. According to the custom, he was twice christened. As an ordinary Muslim, he was named as Mohiuddin Ahmed. But he was not to be that. He was the Imam at Calcutta and a successor to the highest Muslim religious authority. Taking into account all this, he was named Firoz Bakht for the second time. Wahabi and Mehadavi movements which had early influence on Maulana were not merely Indian in character, they had grown into a cult that had fruitful soil everywhere. In such a tradition Maulana was bred as a child and was imparted religious instruction.

In his childhood, he received only religious instruction and that very instruction made him great. In his teens, he was regarded as a renowned scholar on account of his profound scholarship in Muslim religion. At the age of 18, the ulema in Mecca honoured him by conferring on him the title of 'Abul Kalam' (the Master of Learning). Had he continued to do this, the Maulana would have settled in Arabia and the Muslims all over the world would have showered on him the honour of being the greatest scholar of the Muslim religion. In his early twenties, Abul Kalam Azad was acknowledged as a great scholar and out-standing critic of Razi's Commentary on Quran. A born genius as he was, the people did not care to remember either of his birth-names and this learned scholar was known every where only as Abul Kalam Azad. It is in itself a concrete example in the modern age of unique scholarship in boyhood. That is why the Muslim religious scholars in India were so much attached to him for so long. Sincere efforts were being made to see that Maulana Khairuddin should return to India, and, at last, these efforts were crowned with success and Maulana Khairuddin came

back to India with his son, who had already won wide renown on account of his exceptional talent and ability.

Thinking in the traditional manner, the Maulana, too, believed that India should be liberated from the yoke of British power. All the Muslim scholars in India were the uncompromising enemy of the British Rule. In their view the British were the representatives of Christianity. At the end of 7th century there had begun the crusades between the Muslims and the Christians, and they continued upto the Battle of Granad in 1498. The memories of these crusades had been as fresh as dew in the Muslim mind. Hence the malice against the British rule in the veins of the Muslim religious scholars. That is why, in the year 1803, Shah Abdul Aziz announced (by giving a Fatwa) that India has become Dar-ul-Harb (a land of struggle under Islam) and declared Jihad (a religious war) against the British rule. And this Jihad, once declared, would never be withdrawn by the Muslim religious scholars. They were defeated but would never forget that the British were their real enemy.

In 1885 All India Congress came into existence, and, very soon, Deoband, the Muslim religious institution, gave its whole hearted support and extended full co-operation to the Congress. At such a crucial moment, Maulana came back to India, when Deoband was the ardent supporter of the Congress and almost all the Ulemas stood by it.

The Maulana, too, was prepared to participate in Jihad against the British rule. But he differed from others in one respect. For years, the Maulana had lived in Arabia, he was born there and he grew there in a country where 98 percent of the population was Muslim, ruled under Islam, a holy land where people would speak in divine language. He had witnessed the defeats of the Muslims, their misery and their poverty in abundant measure. He was convinced that unless they imbibed the modern education, they would not be fit to live in the modern world. Keeping all this in view, soon after he returned to India, he minutely studied all the works of Sir Sayyad. He was also deeply absorbed in the study of the modern world. He was to learn Hindi, Urdu and English

too. One may not feel it credible that Maulana was thoroughly grounded in English, because, throughout his life, he spoke in his so-called Hindustani that was virtually Urdu with a curious mixture of Arabic and Persian, a language that was beyond the comprehension of the Muslims even. He could not remember and used Urdu words as easily and as appropriately as he could the Arabic words. (Maulana started speaking in Urdu in the manner Pandit Raj Rajeshwar Shastri Dravid used to speak in Marathi.)

Nevertheless, in his critical commentary on Quran, we come across the evaluation of several occidental theories and doctrines and also the innumerable references from the English books with the mention of the relevant page numbers that he would quote. With the time, Maulana insisted on the need of imparting modern education. He increasingly felt to the end of his life the need of modern technology. As far as modernization is concerned, he was mentally nearer to Nehru than to Gandhi. He had thoroughly studied the international politics, especially that of Central Asia. Eminent Journalists of international reputation, including Michael Brecher, mention the fact that India's foreign policy in regard to Central Asia was largely determined by the Maulana's considerations rather than by Nehru's.

The Maulana started publishing '*Al Hilal*' from Calcutta in 1912 and, reading it, the Frontier Gandhi was drawn into politics. Again, he was inspired to receive his instruction from Deoband. With the publication of *Al Hilal* the Maulana started a new epoch in Urdu Journalism. Never before had there been a periodical of such a tremendous circulation; in the first six months, it reached the figure of eleven thousand copies and in the next two years this figure increased to twenty-six thousand. A young editor of twenty-five years, as he was, it was a unique achievement of the Maulana to have popularized a paper in Urdu in a period when illiteracy was widespread and the educated people lacked interest in reading language papers.

The Maulana could make a mark in the sphere of journalism only because he was greatly assisted by his father's friends and the whole of Deoband also came to his help. Moreover, one should not deny the fact that Maulana had awakened the Muslim mind to the realities of the day with his fiery writings. An analytical study of the Muslim politics in the world, a powerful propaganda against the British rule in India and the critical exposition of Quran and its translation were the special features of *Al Hilal*. And yet it was just a periodical printed in an ordinary press. Very soon the Government had to ban its publication and Maulana was put behind the bars.

Even then Maulana was a supporter of the Congress, but he had not yet started taking active part in the Congress politics. On his release, Maulana started a new periodical by name '*Al Balagh*'. With all his zeal and enthusiasm, he participated in Khilafat Movement; he became the secretary of its All India Committee. In 1923, at the age of 35, he became the President of the Indian National Congress. Since then till his death, he was regarded as the greatest leader of the Nationalistic Muslims. He was at the zenith of his popularity in the Muslim community between the years 1912 and 1923. Since the year 1923, his popularity was on decline and after 1935 he had lost almost all respect and influence in the Muslim community.

While studying the life of Maulana, we find the two layers of his personality. One is that of a liberal thinker who is also a scholar and a critic of Quran. This liberalism was not welcomed either by the Hindus or by the Muslims. The other layer is that of a leader of those Muslim religious scholars with whom he had to often compromise. These adjustments of Maulana with the Muslim religious scholars some times went to the extent that one would be inclined to feel that Mohammed Ali Jinnah was preferable to the Maulana. Many times, Maulana, in his effort to adjust with his blind, orthodox followers, had to keep aside his own critical commentary on Quran. Unless the two layers of his personality are taken into consideration, his life cannot be properly grasped and understood. Maulana's genius is re-

vealed in his critical commentary on Quran. So we shall start with that in order to properly understand him.

In respect of his critical commentary on the Quran, Maulana can be considered among the modern politicians as great as Lokmanya Tilak. If we compare the former's scholarship in his religion with latter's, Maulana would perhaps be superior because the one was not educated in the traditional religious school whereas the other was thoroughly bred in it. If we study a religious book as revolutionary in interpretation against the background of popular faith and belief, we should compare Maulana's contribution with Maharishi Dayananda's critical commentary on the Vedas. Still what is striking is that Lokmanya and Dayanand Saraswati could have millions of followers, whereas Maulana could not remain devoted to his own critical commentary on Quran.

That the Maulana had a good deal of faith in his work on Quran is dubious to a great extent. As editor of *Al Hilal*, the Maulana began to translate and critically interpret Quran. In 1916, he announced the completion of his critical exposition of Quran. Had the work been published then, one can imagine the implications in the then current political situation. It is sufficiently evident that the British made persistent efforts to destroy it. In July of the same year, Maulana was arrested and the First Part of the Commentary was confiscated by the Government. Maulana wrote the Second Part in prison and that, too, was confiscated just on the eve of his release. And it was told later that both the parts of the manuscript were lost. Although it was a Herculean task to write the book afresh, the Maulana did it. In 1921, when the book was under print, the Maulana was again arrested and the proofs of the manuscript and the manuscript itself were confiscated by the Government. On release, he came to know that the manuscript was lost. Maulana set out to write the book for the third time and, as a result of it, the two volumes of it could be published in 1930, but, unfortunately, the work was never completed. The copies of the published volumes would not also be available to the general public.

Since 1930, the Muslim religious scholars have severely

attacked Maulana for his critical exposition of the Quran. For fifteen years or so, people saw the Maulana, bitterly criticized by the Muslim religious scholars for his scholarly work on the Quran, but the book itself would not be available. The Muslim religious scholars condemned Maulana, levelling three charges against him—one of Bidat, the other of Iratqum and the third of Iratdat. In Calcutta a certain group of the Muslims resolved to deprive the Maulana of his higher religious position. Maulana, since then, remained only Mohiuddin Ahmed, he would not be the successor to Maulana Khairuddin's office of the Imam and Firoz Bakht. Never the less, he was Abul Kalam, that is, a master of learning and none could deprive him of this title. The Muslim religious scholars were indignant at him, but none dared challenge his erudition.

Maulana's critical exposition of Quran came into the hands of people for the first time in 1945, but then it was too late to serve its original purpose. Had it been published in 1916-17, it would have brought into existence an ideological school of the Maulana's thought and would have won a few followers at least. What is really striking is the fact that a good number of people, second rate or third rate, who live by virtue of their close and intimate relations with the Maulana, would give him adulation but not explain his critical exposition of the Quran to the masses.

In order to understand why people raised a howl against Maulana's commentary, we shall have to take into account the history of Islam. On the death of Mohammed, the divine words passed orally from one generation to another and they were called the Holy Quran. During the times of Khalifa Osman, on the order of Khalifa, the different versions of Quran were collected. There were a number of interpolations in it. But an authorised text of Quran was prepared. Still, there were certain linguistic discrepancies in the script of the Holy Book. In 933 A. D. *i. e.* three centuries after the death of the Prophet, Ibne Isa, Ibne Mujahid and Ibne Muklah, once again, prepared the final version of Quran which is referred to even today. According to the Muslim religious belief, this version is not merely true and holy but it is precisely the original one revealed by God to the Prophet. Since then there is no addition or omission in it. The divine utterances

have been divided in 144 *Suras*. The sequence of all these *Suras* is to be found proper as designed and implied by God. And the interpretation of Quran by *Hadis* is the only authoritative interpretation and no interpretation other than this would be acceptable to the Muslims. The interpretation of the holy book in the manner of *Hadis* is called *Muklid*. Maulana Azad was a non-Muklid who disregarded the tradition to interpret the Holy Book. According to Islam, one ought to accept the tradition first and then reason accordingly, as in Hinduism one can think logically, but following the *Shruti*. This sort of reasoning in accordance with tradition is called *Ijtehad*.

Maulana Azad was of the opinion that he had faith in God and the Holy Book; but he would try to understand it as it is and need not refer to any body's commentary. After all, *Hadis*, he felt, is a human commentary and so is liable to err. So he would like to interpret the Holy Book afresh. The way it was interpreted by others who were born centuries after the death of the Prophet would not be necessarily acceptable to him. Thus it was a challenge by a scholar and an authority on religion to the entire tradition of Islam. Maulana's critical exposition actually aims at the meaning and explanation of Surtu Fatiha i. e. the first seven lines of the Introduction. And it is written in 76 pages plus the additional 174 pages, and thus all together in 250 pages. Since 1945, Maulana could have enough leisure but could not accomplish his work any further than the 18th Section of it. Perhaps he might have not realised in his later years that the world still needed his commentary. This commentary of Quran was just a novel experiment, which, although it has gone far from the tradition, is in line with the Muslim religious books. But unfortunately this experiment remained incomplete.

In his interpretation of Quran, Maulana basing his conclusions on linguistic peculiarities and grammatical aspects, threw light on the connotations of the different Arabic words in the Holy Book and thereby proved how the later scholars made changes in the interpretation of Quran. From the authentic biography of Mohammed by Ibne Ishakh and Ibne-Hisham and also from the critical study of the different versi-

ons, he established the sequence of certain lines in the Holy Book and also spotted out the alterations admitted in it. Maulana insists on the meaning of Quran in the manner it was comprehended in the times of the Prophet. Maulana, too, was far from it by 13 centuries and hence would feel that the meaning of Quran is subject to dissension in different places. The interpretation of Quran as given by Maulana may be true and correct but it is not the one that 30 crores of Muslims all over the world have followed for more than a thousand years; it is not the one they had faith in and it is not the interpretation that affected adversely or favourably the opinion of the world about the Muslims. There can be a difference of opinion as to the acceptance of the interpretation of a religious book... whether to accept the traditional interpretation which has been followed for centuries by the crores with devotion or to accept a scholar's critical interpretation which is altogether new in approach. But the fact is that the religious book does not have any impact on the world as such but the devoted followers who interpret it in the traditional manner, do have a great impact.

The Maulana interpreted Quran with a view to realise the *Ummatul Wahida*. The Prophet Mohammed proclaimed *Hijra* and came from Mecca to Medina. While in Mecca he emphasized the oneness of God, the opposition to the Image worship and complete submission to God. He had expressed his faith in all Prophets prior to him and also claimed that he was not preaching any thing new or fresh as such, but was just following them. Mohammed was told by the angels more than twelve times that God was the Giver of the Message and the prophets are the messengers of God spreading the divine words among the people. And, so, there cannot be any thing new in the Message. God is the Creator of the Universe. He is kind and has fixed the Day of Judgement and on that day the virtuous will go to Heaven and the sinful to Hell. Those purged by suffering and repentance will be pardoned. He believed that God's Message ought to be delivered in popular language. People, once, asked Mohammed that if he was a Prophet, he should perform miracles. Mohammed replied to them that he could not do so unless commanded by God himself. The opposition to Image-worship would do great harm

to the interests of the priests worshipping Kaba in Mecca. In case the Image-worship was forbidden, these priests would have lost their earnings through it. And so they rose against the Prophet. The Quran in this period lays emphasis on the fact that God's prayer house should not be in possession of any one religious group but people belonging to different religions should also have an access to it, if they so will. As the Prophet was persecuted in Mecca by the people there, he had to flee to Medina with his followers for self protection. Here, there was no opposition to the Prophet. So he founded an organisation. Had there been no opposition to Mohammed in Mecca, he would have done there what he did in Medina.

People in Medina belonged to five different religions and sects—Jews, Christians, Satiyan, Magiyan and Image-worshippers. Islam was an addition to those. An appeal was made that they should all acknowledge Mohammed as a Prophet. Despite the religious differences, the people should not mistake the newly emerging religion. All should submit to God and the God who gives Judgement to all is one and the same. Mohammed assured the Jews and the Christians that Islam believed in all the earlier Prophets—Musa, the Prophet of the Jews and Isa, the Prophet of the Christians. In Medina a common mode of prayer was adopted for all religions. It was decided that because the Jews and the Christians were in majority and Jerusalem was their common Holy City, they should all say their prayer with faces turned towards Jerusalem. So far the followers of Mohammed prayed turning their faces towards Mecca, and they were a little unhappy at this. Mohammed convinced them that when God is omnipresent, what harm is there in praying with faces turned towards Jerusalem. Mohammed assured the non-Muslims that they would not be converted to Islam by force. Those who are inspired by God to adopt Islam should only do so.

Thus Mohammed founded a multi-religious state. Some of the inhuman practices were forbidden. It was unanimously decided that they should give up the practice of burying the daughters soon after their births. On the death of a man, his property used to be inherited, and so also his

wife or wives, by the successor. It was decided that the property would be inherited but not the wife or the wives on human grounds. There was such a heavy rate of interest as would double the principal in a few years. Charging heavy interest was forbidden. The liberation of a slave was regarded as an act of virtue. It was decided that the state should decide all the trials to bring equality in justice.

There was a little discontent among the people in general on account of the introduction of the social reforms. The Mahajarin in Mecca were constructing an independent mosque of their own. And the Prophet condemned them in severe words. The displeased Jews were told to confirm, what Mohammed said, through their religious book, '*Torat.*' One day the Jews and the Christians asked him how the people other than them would be received in Heaven. Mohammed replied that the Prophets such as Ibrahim, Ismail and Isac and Jacob who came prior to Musa were revered by them all. These Prophets weren't either Christians nor Jews in their faith, but still attained Heaven. Some orthodox Jews said that they would not be sent to hell at all. The Prophet said in reply that, irrespective of religion, people would go to heaven if they are virtuous and to hell if they are sinful. Some of the Muslims were at daggers drawn with the Jews; to them Mohammed said that all Jews were not bad. Maulana believed from his study of Quran that Mohammed realized the essential truth of all religions and therefore aimed at the foundation of a multi-religious state. And this, according to the Maulana was the chief theme of Quran.

The Jews and Christians were not satisfied with the Prophet's multi-religious state. They got their separate independent prayer houses. The Image-worshipping priests from Mecca attacked Medina already involved in internal conflicts. Mohammed warned his followers not to attack but allowed them to fight for self-protection. God does not love them who attack others. When these people in Medina fought for self-protection the priests from Mecca would withdraw and attack afresh. So, of necessity,

Mohammad gave consent to his followers to attack the enemy whenever they were disposed. And this is how the entire Arabia came under the influence of Islam.

Maulana Azad argued what the circumstances forced the prophet to do is not true religion. What Mohammed planned to achieve was the creation of a multi-religious state *i.e.* *Ummat-Ul-Wahida*. We should see that such a state should emerge first and then thrive. For Maulana Azad, this was the meaning of *Quran*. There were no counter-arguments from the Muslim religious scholars, for the Prophet's notion of *Ummat-Ul-Wahida* could not be unacceptable to them, as there were several references to it in the Holy Book. Had the people from Mecca not invaded the followers of the Prophet there would have been no Crusades fought with swords. But the Maulana would ask how it would be proper to think of the Prophet's mission—his life and work—in relevance to his enemy's attack.

The Maulana was of the opinion that the true nature of Islam cannot be grasped unless one takes into consideration what the Prophet intended to do. Maulana's arguments on the interpretation of Quran were incontrovertible, for they were supported by the actual wording of Quran and were based on grammatical and linguistic analysis of the text. But still they would not be acceptable to the Muslim religious scholars for that they thought do a great harm to the so-called Islam in the minds of the people. They wish the people to have their faith in all the Prophets mentioned in Quran. By this they mean what Quran says is the opinion held by all the Prophets. They believe that the Bible has to be corrected on the basis of Quran and not vice-versa. Anything found in Quran, if not found in Bible, must be accepted as its lost part and whatever found in Bible, if not found in Quran, must be treated as interpolation. This is the line of their thinking. They believe in one religion only and that is Islam. All other religions, according to them, are corrupt. If you disregard *Hadis*, you will have to treat the entire Islamic laws as temporal subject to alteration. The Muslims would not allow any of these things, and these are the things Maulana's critical commentary on Quran aims at. It looks as if this

critical exposition was to proclaim that the secular state was God's gift to man. It would have been really surprising, had not the Muslim religious scholars desired that such a man, for his revolutionary interpretation of Quran, deserved to be stoned to death.

About 90-92 percent of the Muslims in the world are Sunnis in their faith. All these Muslims show respect to **Khulfa-e-Rashidin** i.e. the first four Khalifas. In Maulana's view, none of them was a prophet, and hence, need not be looked upon as an authority. In 632 A. D. Mohammed died and Abu Bakr became the Khalifa. Different groups rose in revolt against him and Abu Bakr, after a great massacre, succeeded in suppressing them all. All this was a part of the mortal Abu Bakr and had no relevance to Islam. But, in this period, the war-mongering slogans became vitally significant. Those who died in war were said to go to the heaven. During the times of the Second Khalifa Umar, the Muslims conquered one country after another and compelled the Jews and the Christians to evacuate the land. The people in the conquered land would be converted to Islam by force. The true followers of the Prophet would not participate in this politics of evil, for they regarded the worship of God as more significant than Jihad and victory. They liked to be deeply absorbed in meditation and in solitude. Their way was regarded as *Tariqat*. But a greater importance was attached to the fighting, killing, and attacking with a sword. All Muslim religious books, *Hadis* and *Shariat*, may be useful but still human and could be imperfect and outdated. It is not an eternal message of the God.

After 20 years, on the death of the Prophet, while compiling Quran, the rulers and his people composed the *Suras* in accordance with their needs, turned up-side-down the positions of the particular *Suras* and thus contrived to change their context for self interest and convenience. What the rulers needed to have was not to be found in Quran, and, so, for two hundred years after the death of the Prophet, they had conveniently included in *Hadis* the words as they would have come from Mohammed's lips. (This corrupt practice is found on different levels. In the authentic version of Quran, there is

an applause of Ayesha, but Ibne Sabit accepted Hafsha's version as a standard one. The sequence of the *Suras* was determined by Khalifa Osman. Ayesha herself, riding a camel, is said to participate in the war against Ali. Thus the wife of the Prophet fought against the Prophet's son-in-law. In the thick of the fight, Mavia put Khalifa and his lineage to an end. And it reached a climax when Ibne Abidaud-Al-Maumum proclaimed himself to be the new Prophet and the Khalifa also gave his consent to this. Maulana said that no where in Quran is there a mention of the message to the effect that the traditional interpretation should be honoured for its correct understanding. Again, the Quran does not say that one should go to the Ulema in order to understand the commandments of God. According to the Maulana the differences between the relations are due to differences in space, time, environment and mass psychology. In the course of time, the followers themselves correct their own religion and that is why the Maulana hated all traditionalists and their interpretations.

Maulana's interpretation was revolutionary. Sticking to his interpretation had he attacked the Muslim religious scholars, he would have secured at least a few but honest disciples. But this was not to happen. After 1920, Maulana Azad began to take part in practical politics, but would not find the newly educated Muslims to concur with his views because they had received inspiration from Sir Sayyad Ahmed Khan. They were very friendly and intimate with the British and would not welcome democracy in India. The educated Muslim was moderate in his views and was afraid of the Hindu majority and, so, sided with the British. It is a paradox that those who championed the cause of India's freedom, and condemned the British as their enemy were in themselves the fanatic Muslim religious scholars. And Maulana was destined to be their leader, one who would try to please them and adjust with them. Every one had to encounter the same difficulty. Even Mahatma Gandhi was more attached to the Muslim fanatics than Jinnah, because only they were prepared to fight against the British. Those who fought against the British wanted to see an independent unpartitioned India. Maulana was mistaken in his belief that he would lead

them, despite their dream of United India as an Islamic Nation, to *Ummatul Wahida*, the multi-religious state.

Sometimes, we feel why our leaders have not compromised with the educated Muslims instead of these fanatics. One has to attribute it to the Hinduism hidden in the minds of the Hindus. These leaders must have believed, in their innocence that they would be successful in tackling these non-separatist Muslims after the British have left the shores of India. They seem to have thought that it would not be difficult for them to accomodate Muslim communalism in the new context of emerging democracy with 75 per cent of Hindu majority and without any intervention of the British. On the other hand it was rather difficult for them to cooperate with the newly educated Muslim section, for they were firm on the partition of India. From the very beginning, the students of Aligarh were the followers of Sir Sayyad Ahmed Khan and they were all opposed to the Congress. Deoband, the Muslim religious institution, on the other hand, supported the Congress from its begining, *i. e.* even prior to the times of Lokmanya Tilak and Gandhiji.

Considering Indian politics, one feels that all have committed the same mistake. Every one believes that the orthodox Muslims should blindly follow the leadership of these religious scholars. The Congress never cared for its own leadership. The Congress leaders were never the religious saints nor did they belong to any Hindu religious institution nor had they been ever blessed by Sankaracharya. The Hindu leaders of the Congress were the newly educated barristers, doctors or professors. The conservative Hindus followed them with blind faith. The same thing happened in the Muslim community. The newly educated Muslims joined the Muslim League and the League gradually became popular with the support of the Muslims as a whole. And never could our Muslim religious scholars win the mass-support of the Muslims. It was impossible too, for these Muslim scholars spoke the language of the Medieval Age. The Ulema were helpful to some extent but could not meet the challenges of the present, as they lived in and thought of the past only. The Congress was in a fix whether to accept the partition at

the outset or to retain united India to the last. In the light of this fact one can understand how and why the Congress supported the leadership of these fanatic Muslims and also Maulana's endeavours to adjust with them.

After the Khilafat Movement Maulana organized Jamiat-ul-Ulema and sought to unite the Muslim religious scholars in the fight against the British. Maulana Mohammed Ali, Shaukat Ali, Ansari and Kichlu were the people he brought together. Dr. Kichlu considered himself to be as great a national leader as Sayyad Mohammed, but he believed in religious propaganda and its propagation. He was of the opinion that in case the Indians created any obstacles in the spread of Islam, he would seek the support of the Muslim powers in the Islamic countries of the World, to fight against these obstacles. He made the mention of it on innumerable occasions in his public speeches. Surprisingly enough, Mohammed Ali used to say that a poor and wretched Muslim, devoid of character, was greater, in his view, than Gandhiji only on account of the fact that he was a Muslim. People, who spoke sheer non-sense in this manner came together in our national struggle for freedom and they were hailed as the nationalist Muslims.

There were several centres of Muslim religious education in India. All these centres--Deoband, Firangi Mahal, Bareilly, Rampur and Nadvat-ul-Ulema of Lucknow came together in the Khilafat Movement and provided the Muslim leadership to Congress. Due to Khilafat, these Muslim religious scholars earned reputation in the Congress and as a consequence of it, people like Barrister Jinnah and Asaf Ali felt that they had no significant role whatsoever to play in the Congress. This organisation of the nationalist Muslims was an ardent supporter of the demand of the separate electorates which was later put forth by the Muslim League and accepted by the British. These so-called nationalist Muslim leaders would propose from the Congress platform that the Hindus should either accommodate the untouchables among themselves or help them to be converted to Islam. The Moplas rose in revolt and Jamiat-ul-Ulema was in the fore to honour them and congratulate them. The assassination of Swami Shradhanand was look-

ed upon as an act of religious martyrdom and the assassin was declared as a great servant of the religion by Jamiat-Ul-Ulema and Deoband. And all this was tolerable to the Congress for the support of the Muslims in the national struggle for the country's freedom and independence.

Never did these Ulema take any part in the freedom struggle but Maulana took a leading part every time. Maulana's sacrifice in the freedom struggle knew no bounds. He never spoke in an irresponsible and fanatic language. At the most he would go to the extent of saying that the Hindus in the Muslim majority provinces are in themselves the greatest safeguards for the Muslims in the Hindu majority provinces. The Muslim majorities should protect the interests of the Hindus in their provinces and, in turn, the Hindus in the rest of India will look after the protection of the Muslim interests. That is why Maulana did not support the demand for Pakistan. Such a demand, Maulana thought, could do a great harm to the Muslim interests. This is what Maulana used to say at the most, and would not add a word more. He knew his bounds and would not like to cross them. He did not say that India should be theocratic state. Never did he say anything in the fanatic tone of Maulana Asad Madni, who supported the demand for Pakistan, provided that it would be an Islamic state and opposed it only on account of its emergence as a secular state. Maulana opposed Pakistan for the partition of the country, in his view, was not desirable in the interests of the Hindus and the Muslims alike. He was the supporter, unlike his followers, of the United India, not to see her as a theocratic state of Islam. He wanted it, on the contrary, to do an experiment of *Ummatul-Wahida* a multi-religious state, wherein there would be a greater stress on the modern scientific and technological education and the least on *Hadis*.

In such a political environment of fanaticism and opportunism the Maulana lived. A time came when Maulana was alone among the leaders of the first rank in the Congress to make the persistent demand for United India. Mahatma Gandhi, too, had blessed the partition; Sardar and Nehru

were its supporters. The Hindus did not like when the Maulana spoke against Sardar. The Maulana wished that Sardar should take over Finance so that the League, may not be in a position to use veto and impair the working of the Government. But Sardar was not prepared to leave the Home Department and allowed the League, with the Finance, to have its own way. He would not care even if the whole government collapsed. The Maulana believed that the Central Home Ministry was not powerful because, in the event of the riots, the provincial Government would shield them and the Central Home Ministry would not be able to protect the people in the provinces. The partition was impending and Sardar wanted the Home Department to unite the rest of India. The Maulana, on the other hand, did not desire the partition and, in order to avert it, wanted a strong Central Government and better administration in the provinces. This was the point of difference in the attitudes of the Sardar and the Maulana. The Maulana wanted unpartitioned India to realise his Utopian dream of *Ummatul Waheda* and he would have been the founder of it. He would have, again, done the experiment of *Ummatul Waheda*, once made by the Prophet Mohammed. But he would not understand how it would be possible for him, a mortal, to achieve the *Ummatul Waheda* when the Prophet himself failed in achieving it.

The Maulana had been a Minister for ten years in free India. But during these years he never attempted any fanatical activities as are pursued by the present Muslim religious organisations. He increased the budget on education from two crores of rupees to thirty but the additional twenty eight crores were not invested on religious instruction. The Congress had conceded 33 per-cent seats for the Muslims in United India, but in the partitioned India Maulana asked for only 10 per-cent in proportion to the Muslim population, and was not grieved to see when only six per-cent Muslims could get themselves elected. In the linguistic organisation of the provinces, he never demanded a separate province for Urdu.

.The Maulana's life is a terrific failure. He could neither draw the Muslim masses into politics nor could he make

the Muslim religious scholars think in a new way. He could not be the pioneer of a new movement that would bring about a revolution in the Muslim religious thought. He attempted a critical exposition of Quran which neither the Hindus nor the Muslims take trouble to read. This failure of Maulana is not the failure of the politician. It is the failure of one who, while challenging the whole Islamic tradition of 1300 years, cherished new hopes and new aspirations but practically had to adjust with the scabs. Really, it is a pity that such a selfless worker, such a powerful writer and orator and such a great religious scholar as the Maulana should live for seventy years and breathe his last without leaving any impact on his people. The conservative Hindus think of Maulana not as one born in the high lineage of Jamaluddin and the illustrious family of Khairuddin, not also as a great man who had treasured, throughout his life, the hope of *Ummatul Waheda* but as one who always tried, in his simplicity and innocence, to bide the Muslim communalism, whether genuine or otherwise. Some times they seem to look upon Maulana as a shrewed, clever and cunning communalist of Jamiat-ul-Ulema. Maulana's followers also did not care to change the image of their leader in the minds of the people. As a Minister for Education and a leader of the Congress, Maulana had several followers, but Abul Kalam, the Master of Learning had no disciples. That was the greatest misfortune of Abul Kalam Azad. And, it was the unkindest cut of all,

# Maulana Azad's Concept of National Integration

S. A. Ansari

“The spectacle that India presents today is a strange contrast between integration and lack of it. We find that the casteism, linguism and religious communalism are blocking the way of national solidarity. Out of these three, religious communalism has a fairly long history behind it which, though it might seem to be dead and gone, still dominates the minds of many people as a living memory. Religious communalism is the greatest and the most serious obstacle in the way of national solidarity. It has various facets and conflicting implications. But its most dangerous manifestation is the politics based on Hinduism or Islam.

It is interesting that there are many common areas that produce similar effects on the minorities. The Hindu communalism is pushing and the Muslim communalism is pulling the Muslims towards isolation.<sup>1</sup>

Both agree that Muslims should not be allowed to become an integral part of the Indian nation, but should be forced out of the field of common national life into the position of a political minority. Both aim at making the Muslims a protected minority. In such circumstances the most important and urgent problem of our national integration is to prevent Muslims from drifting away from the mainstream of national life. Such isolationism is harmful not only to the nation, but also to the community itself. It is gratifying to note that a serious thought is being given to resolve communal tensions at all levels of Government and political parties, but unfortunately the approach that is being generally adopted in this regard gives rise to the apprehension that the disease has not been rightly diagnosed and, therefore, the treatment that is prescribed will prove to be not only useless but dange-

rous. Under such circumstances Maulana Azad's concept of National integration seems to be more practical and pragmatic which could lead us in a right direction.

Among the leading personalities, those who have influenced and left a deep effect on the minds of the Indian Muslims, Maulana Azad is prominent. His contribution to the Muslim life and thought is tremendous. In the political field his achievement was comparatively more definite, positive and permanent. The work of bringing the old and the new educated classes of Muslims closer to each other was performed with greater success by Maulana Azad. He represented a trend of composite nationalism and till his death he was champion of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Azad started his political career as a religious leader (Alim). His early career was governed by his religious teachings. It includes the period during the phase from 1906 to 1920. His nationalism was uncompromisingly Islamic implying non-cooperation with non-Muslims including the British. Temperamentally Azad was a rebel and so he could not remain a blind follower either of his father or of Sir Syed. Very soon he realized that the political policies pursued by Sir Syed, *i.e.*, of preventing the Muslims from participating in political activities and consistently following a pro-British course, had outlived their usefulness. Moreover, in his early age he had to travel from Calcutta to some Arabian countries along with his father. There he witnessed a strong anti-British feeling and this created an impact on the mind of young Azad.<sup>2</sup>

So, he decided to abandon the pro-British strategy of Sir Syed and instead started advocating that the Muslims should participate in the political life of the country. He decided to uproot the idea of loyalty to the British Crown from the minds of the Indian Muslims and for this purpose he started a Weekly called "*the Al-Hilal*", from Calcutta in June, 1912. The very first issue of this Weekly acted as an explosive in the Muslim world and compelled them to consider seriously whether there was not some thing radically wrong in their way of things? The inspiring message that

Azad gave to the Muslims of India through *Al Hilal* had two main objectives: "Firstly, to revive in them the true spirit of religion and to reorganize their religious and social life and secondly to infuse in them the spirit of freedom as enjoined upon them by the Islam."

In this stage Azad can be regarded as an advocate of religious nationalism. On 8th September, 1912 in an article entitled "AL-HILAL KA MUQSAḌ AUR POLITICAL TALEEM" (Al-Hilal's Aim and political education) Azad clearly states that he refuses to separate his political views from the framework of religion and asserted that Islam brought an exalted and all inclusive social order for mankind. He added that "It is regrettable that Muslims (of today) have not seen Islam at its zenith. If they had, they would not be bowing their heads in subjection to the Hindus,"<sup>3</sup> He declared unequivocally that the aim of the AL-HILAL was to exhort Muslims to follow the book of Allah and the Shariat of the Prophet. Thus Azad started as "Zealous Muslim", and an uncompromising upholder of pure Islam. During this phase of Azad's political career, he was very much over-whelmed by Islam and he wanted to convince Muslims that "In cultural, political or other matters, Muslims ought to be Muslims". Asked by a Muslim journalist whether Muslims should join non-Muslims in political matters, he replied "Islam is so exalted a religion that its followers are not constricted to ape the Hindus for the formulation of their political policies".<sup>4</sup>

Azad did not stop at this and added that "their (Muslims) nationality is not inspired by the racial or geographical exclusivity, it transcends all man-made barriers-Europe may be inspired by the concepts of nations and nationhood, but Muslims can seek inspiration for self awareness only from God and Islam." Distinguishing this theory of nationalism he wrote that the non-Muslims can, "like other nations, revive their self awareness on the basis of secular nationalism, but it is indeed not possible for Muslims."<sup>5</sup>

During this period Azad firmly believed that the Muslims were the leaders of the world and if they would submit to God the entire world would submit to them. Azad, thus continued

to profess and preach this brand of religious nationalism up to 1920. His policies during this period were, "lack of trust in the British Government and non-cooperation with the non Muslims." He used to consider himself as a citizen of the International Islamic Brotherhood which was then known as the "Turkish Khilafat". "Thus up to 1920 Azad was so overwhelmed by religion that his political perspective was blurred.

After the *Al-Hilal*, Azad started another Weekly called "*Al-Balagh*" in 1916. Through the writings in these weeklies Azad not only infused a new spirit in the intellectual and literary life of Indian Muslims, but also led to their religious and political awakening. This period of Azad's political life can be regarded as a romantic phase, but during this period he was successful in creating a consciousness of current political affairs and desire for political freedom among the Muslims. One important thing which is to be noted is that Azad, unlike other *Ulema*, firmly believed that the independence can be achieved by the Indians themselves and not with the help of "Foreign Powers". Secondly, Azad was anti-British mainly because he thought that the Britishers were the enemy of Islam and Muslims. Therefore, he launched a campaign against Britishers. In short, during this first phase of his political career, Azad consistently followed the policies of a Muslim Nationalist.

After 1920 a radical change came in his thinking. He was externed from Bengal under the Defence Ordinance and he had to stay in Ranchi where afterwards he was placed under internment. During his forced stay at Ranchi, the Massacre of Jalianwala Bagh and the imposition of Martial Law throughout the Punjab had set the whole country afire. Muslims were particularly wild with rage on account of the behaviour of the British and her allies with the Turkish Empire. An outcome of these events was the "Khilafat Movement." Maulana Azad wanted to take advantage of Khilafat Movement in order to bring Muslims and Hindus together so that both the communities could fight shoulder to shoulder against the British rule. For this purpose Azad took the consent of Gandhiji, who in turn persuaded the Congress to make the Khilafat demand a part of national demand. This was the second big

success of Azad's political life. Azad's speeches and writings during the days of Khilafat Movement created a sense of national fervour and national unity. "Muslims en-mass joined the Congress for the First time since its inception and the general slogan, Hindu Musalman ki jai, was heard everywhere."

Though Azad was successful in bringing Hindus and Muslims together the effort was not based on the consideration of a common nationality (composite nationality). To Azad it was a temporary cooperation in order to attain the freedom and to drive the Britishers out of the country. Mustafa Kamal Ata-Turk, himself a Turk abolished Khilafat. Arab Nationalism appealing to all Arabs on the basis of language and common history and culture regardless of racial, denominational affiliation also asserted itself. In the mean time, Azad visited Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Turkey. This greatly influenced Azad and his notion of nationality consequently changed drastically. In the post 1920 period Azad ceased to be a Muslim nationalist. He accepted the fundamental principles of Arab and Turkish (Secular and territorial) nationalism and vigorously applied them to the political situation in India."<sup>6</sup>

Thus after the world war I and the abolition of Khilafat Maulana Azad's views radically changed. He renounced his Islamic Nationalism and embraced Indian Nationalism and accepted secular and territorial national philosophy. "The votary of Muslim Nationalism had come under the spell of the New Turkish Nationalism and foresaken all earlier beliefs and pronounced his faith in a joint (Hindu-Muslim) Nationalism in India, which according to Azad was a pre-requisite of winning independence from the British." Maulana's address to the All India Khilafat Conference at Kanpur on 24th December, 1925 is a testimony of his radically changed views. When Kamal Ata-Turk abolished the Khilafat, Maulana did not express a word of regret. This itself shows that Maulana was no more a religious nationalist. "Throughout the later period of the Khilafat Movement, Maulana Azad looked upon it basically as a struggle for uniting Hindus and Muslims against the British Imperialism."

Azad attached great importance to communal harmony and to him Hindu-Muslim unity was essential for bringing freedom. While addressing a provincial Assembly of the Khilafat Movement at Agra on 25th October, 1921, he referred to "Hindu-Muslim cooperation as the covenant of the Prophet Mohammed, entered between the Muslims and other residents of Medina for the purpose of establishing a working alliance for common defence." Azad used the key phrase "Ummat-i-Wahida" for a "Joint-Hindu-Muslim" Nation. The impact of Arab Nationalism was overwhelming on Azad. Delivering an address to an all India Khilafat Conference on 29th December, 1925, he said "like India the population of Syria is also heterogeneous. There are Muslims, Christians of different sects and Druze tribe in Syria, who for centuries used to cut each other's throat. The mention of the notorious crusade is enough to conjure up floods of blood that once swept over the middle East. Nevertheless all Syrians are today united for the liberation of their country and their slogan is—Religion is for God and the home-land is for every one." Comparing Syrians with the Indians, Azad remarked, "Unfortunately from the view point of education and political maturity, even our most advanced classes are not prepared to go that far (to the extent of accepting the implications of Arab National slogans). Religious bigotry, class friction and communal prejudices are still blocking the way of national progress"<sup>8</sup>. "If Syrians could think of composite nationalism, so could Indians" pleaded Azad.

Azad used the preamble of the covenant to bring home to the Muslims his own version of composite and united Nationalism. Azad interpreted "Ummat-i-Wahida" as one nation. He believed that in spite of religious, racial and other differences, India is one nation. The composite nationalism for Azad was not an idea based on a temporary "Moahida" as believed by some 'Ulema' but Azad aimed at the creation of an indivisible and permanent nation (Ummat-i-Wahida), comprising of all Indians irrespective of caste, creed or religion. During the course of his historic Presidential Address at the Ramgarh Congress Session. Azad while, proudly professing his being a Muslim with 1300 years'

glorious tradition admitted. "But with all these feelings, I possess another instinct which the realities of my life have created and from which the spirit of Islam cannot check me. It is that I am proud of a feeling that *I am an Indian and member of the indivisible and united nationality of India.*" This indivisible and united nationality or composite nationality of India was a "Ummat-i-Waheda" for Azad. Thus Azad dreamt of a composite nationalism with complete harmony among all the sections of the people, while retaining their individuality.

Maulana Azad was essentially a religious man but he was rational and modern in his thinking. He tried to reconcile religion with reason without injuring either. Maulana's religious insight helped him to formulate his views on unity and integration. He brought a strictly rational and logical attitude of mind to bear on all questions and refused to take any thing for granted. He clearly differentiates between what he calls the "vital roots of religion" from its innumerable branches and leaves." He believed that the root of all the religions is one. He proved that all religious teaching consists of two parts, one giving the eternal principles i. e., the sources of religion, and the other external form. The first is the principal thing (root), where as the second is subordinate (branches). The first is called the faith by the Quran and the second is called the rules of conduct or the Shariah. Maulana said that the religions of the world differ not in the principal thing i. e. eternal truth, but in the rules of conduct, ways of worship etc. This difference was inevitable, because the object of religion is the well being of mankind and as the conditions of the mankind change with the age and country, therefore, every religion is different in its outward form. This outward form reflects the spirit of the age and country in which it was taught, and it suited that age and country. Thus Maulana believed in the unity of religion, in the unity of God and the unity of brotherhood. Unity of brotherhood means that in the multifarious diversity of mankind is hidden its unity.

To conclude, Maulana Azad's earlier writings which enunciate religious nationalism are least helpful and useful in

bringing about integration in the country. Fortunately Maulana himself renounced his stand. But what Azad expressed after 1920 is extremely relevant and useful. His ideas of the unity of religion may be debated as an operative basis of national integration but since Indian history has been a quest of religious spiritualism, it may help the common people. Here Gandhiji and Azad stand on a par. What is of great significance in Azad is his address to the Indian National Congress in 1940 where he clearly advocates the ideas of common citizenship.

It is to be noted that the reactionaries or Jamaat-e-Islami is more inspired by the early writings of Maulana Azad. It is the duty of the secularists to reject the earlier phase and make an effective use of Maulana's ideas of common citizenship based on synthetic nationalism.

## Notes and References

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# The Maulana-as I knew him

M. N. Masud

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad died in Delhi in the early hours of the morning of February 22, 1958. Three days previously he had had the attack of paralysis. Until then, he had been enjoying his normal health. In fact, necessary preparations were being made for his tour to Russia and some other East European countries. He had dined at his regular hour on the evening of the 18th and had usual good sleep. I had met him before his dinner and he had gone through, with me, the draft of his speech which as President of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations he was going to deliver shortly. In those three days of his illness he never seemed to have regained full consciousness and I do not think he recognised anyone of those who visited him or even from among those who did not leave his bed-side.

But, this cannot be said about Pandit Ji. And, the reason perhaps was that there existed between the two a very strong bond of friendship, much stronger than many knew. If I knew Maulana Saheb, and I think I knew him well, I can then say that if Maulana Saheb loved anyone in this world during the years I worked with him it was Pandit Ji, and Pandit Ji alone. It is possible that because of the strong feelings that these two great leaders bore for each other Maulana Saheb could recognise Pandit Ji and no one else during his illness. I saw Pandit Ji in tears when Maulana Saheb was laid in the portico before he was carried to his grave near Jama Mosque. It was Pandit Ji who assisted in lowering the coffin to the grave and perhaps he was the last person to bid farewell to one who always stood by him and who never hesitated to speak out his mind and pull Pandit Ji up whenever he felt that Pandit Ji was wrong or too hasty or too impulsive.

Maulana Saheb in his life time as well as after his death has been regarded as a great religious teacher, an orator, a scholar, a master of Urdu prose, a politician and even as a statesman. He might have been all these but to me, above all, he was a person of very wide sympathies, a citizen of the world, with little or no prejudices of caste, colour or creed, always courteous and always soft spoken; every word of his was fully weighed in the scales of his avowed principles and ideals before it left his lips whether in a private conversation or in a public meeting. He used to say that a word uttered was like an arrow which once released could never be brought back. He would quote the saying :

“तलवार का घाव भर जाता है, बात का नहीं”

(A sword's wound can be healed but not that inflicted by a harsh or an unkind word.) He would never make a promise but if a promise was made he would see to it that it was kept whatever the cost or whoever might be inconvenienced. He would never argue for the argument's sake and if he differed from his visitor's point of view he would keep quiet but would not say 'yes' to please anyone whatever had been his status in society. I admired and respected him for what he was as a person, one who could be fully and completely trusted, one who inspired confidence and one who met you on an equal footing and not from a high pedestal which made you feel inferior to him in any manner.

I met Maulana Saheb for the first time in my life on September 14, 1947 in Delhi, in the Darya Ganj area where my parents had sought shelter after their house had been looted in New Delhi and with whom I happened to be staying at the time. Those were the dark days when insanity prevailed and most of us had gone mad to the extent that we were killing men, women and children in the name of God and for the sake of religion we happened to be born in. Perhaps, I would not have known him as well as I did if I had not met him frequently and at odd hours as the situation demanded, in those difficult days for all of us in the country. I had therefore, no hesitation in accepting the post of his Private Secretary

when it was offered even though I was holding a permanent post, that of the Chief Secretary, in the erstwhile State of Rampur in U.P.

Very soon after my appointment I realised that Maulana Saheb was a very lonely man but who would perhaps not be averse to companionship if he found it and was offered in the right spirit. Such an opportunity came my way when I accompanied him on his visit to Srinagar where he used to stay at the State Guest House at the famous Chashamae Shahi which has now been turned into a tourist resort. He knew that I was very fond of long walks in the afternoon. He, however, did not see me going out for a walk for the first few days of our stay there. He asked me at dinner time, the only time he was meeting me apart from our meetings for the work, why was it that I was not going out for my walk. I told him that to walk all by oneself was not a very pleasant exercise. Besides, I did not like to leave him alone even though I knew that he would not want me after the office hours. He did not pursue the subject any further and I kept quiet. On the following afternoon he sent his Jamadar and asked me to get ready for a walk with him. And from that day till the end of our stay at the Chashamae Shahi we went out for long walks together and this practice was scrupulously followed by Maulana Saheb in the subsequent years also. He was a different person altogether during those walks, so gentle and so considerable, so confiding and so full of conversation.

I have said that it was at the dinner time only that I met Maulana Saheb apart from our meetings in connection with the work. He had his breakfast and luncheon all by himself and I had decided that I would give my company to him at these also. One afternoon after we had been walking together for several days he asked what was my time for taking my luncheon. I gave him the hour at which he was luncheoning which was earlier than mine. Thereupon he said, why did not I have lunch with him. I said it would be a great pleasure and thus we started lunching together. Almost the same questions and answers were held

in respect of breakfast after we had been lunching together for a few days and thus breakfast was also started being taken in company. I am telling these incidents to show that Maulana Saheb could be very friendly to those who knew how to be friendly with him. It was not in his nature to be friendly with those who did not seek his friendship or his confidence in the manner he had decided to be the right and proper one. He certainly had his own particular way of doing things and placed very high values on modes of thought and behaviour. He was not in the habit of using harsh language for anyone whatever the provocation and therefore very much disliked if strong words were used in his presence.

There was another aspect of Maulana Saheb's character which I valued most. It was that he would give respect and dignity to others in the same manner as he would like it to be given to him. Such an attitude to life seems very easy to take and a very desirable one to cherish. But how difficult it is to bring it into practice and make it a part of one's existence we all know. Maulana Saheb gave respect to everyone, rich or poor, to his countryman or a foreigner, to a scholar or an illiterate, a well dressed person or one with very little to show by way of clothing. The reason was that Maulana Saheb respected 'man' and gave respect to him whenever or wherever he met or found him. His status in life, his erudition or his wealth or the colour of the skin or his religion or political beliefs never weighed with Maulana Saheb's appreciation of human values. He saw man with no trappings and he loved man, respected man and gave dignity to man. According to him, by loving man he was loving his God, the Creator, by respecting man he was respecting his God and by giving dignity to man he was raising his God to the highest and the noblest of what his mind was capable of conceiving or imagining. Maulana Saheb would very often observe,

“आदमी इस दुनिया में बहुत हैं लेकिन इन्सान नहीं मिलता”

“There are many human beings in this world but very few who are really human.”

Maulana Saheb loved humanity and intensely believed in humanism. Perhaps because he did not find much of it in evidence in his time—and things have gone worse since his death—he started preferring the company of his books and his cup of tea to human company. For him it can be truly said that Maulana Saheb was never less alone than when alone. But, he was not an ascetic or a recluse. He always liked good company when he found it and he always liked to live well. He was not meant to be a politician but politics drew him into its whirlpool because of the political and social conditions of the time. But, once he had joined politics he knew what was best for his country and he tried along with others to get it irrespective of the cost involved or the sacrifices required.

If I am asked what in my opinion had been Maulana Saheb's objective in life or the one ideal he cherished most I would say that it was which has very well been expressed in verse by that great Turkish poet, Maulana Rumi, who while addressing 'man' said

तू बराये वस्ल करदन आमदी । न बराये फस्ल करदन आमदी

(You have come into the world to bring people together not to cast them apart)

Maulana Saheb believed that his mission in life was to bring people together and not to do anything which was likely to keep them apart. And, I believe, Maulana Saheb lived fully-up to his ideal.